THE

POETICAL WORKS

OF

COLERIDGE, SHELLEY, AND KEATS.

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OF

COLERIDGE, SHELLEY, AND KEATS.

COMPLETE IN ONE VOLUME.

PARIS

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NOTICE OF THE PUBLISHERS.

Messrs. Galignani beg leave to intimate, that the present edition of the Works of Coleridge, Shelley, and Keats, is infinitely more perfect than any of those published in London; as they have been favoured, from private sources, with many original productions of these esteemed writers, which are now for the first time given to the public; in addition to which, all their contributions have been carefully selected from the numerous miscellaneous publications in which they have from time to time appeared.

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SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE.

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Memoir of Samuel Taylor Coleridge.

There is no writer of his time who has been more the theme of panegyric by his friends, and of censure by his enemies, than Coleridge. It has been the custom of the former to injure him by extravagant praise, and of the latter to pour upon his head much unmerited abuse. Coleridge has left undone so much which his talents and genius would have enabled him to effect, and has done on the whole so little, that he has given his foes apparent foundation for some of their vituperation. His natural character, however, is indolent; he is far more ambitious of excelling in conversation, and of pouring out his wild philosophical theories—of discoursing about

Fix'd fate, free-will, fore-knowledge absolute—

the mysteries of Kant, and the dreams of metaphysical vanity, than «in building the lofty rhyme.» His poems, however, which have been recently collected, form several volumes;—and the beauty of some of his pieces so amply redeems the extravagance of others, that there can be but one regret respecting him, namely, that he should have preferred the short-lived perishing applause bestowed upon his conversation, to the lasting renown attending successful poetical efforts. Not but that Coleridge may lay claim to the praise due to a successful worship of the muses; for as long as the English language endures, his «Geneviève» and «Ancient Mariner» will be read: but he has been content to do far less than his abilities clearly demonstrate him able to effect.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge was born at Ottery Saint Mary, a town of Devonshire, in 1773. His father, the Rev. John Coleridge, was vicar there, having been previously a schoolmaster at South Molton. He is said to have been a person of considerable learning, and to have published several essays in fugitive publications. He assisted Dr Kennicot in collating his manuscripts for a Hebrew bible, and, among other things, wrote a dissertation on the «Λογος.» He was also the author of an excellent Latin grammar. He died in 1782, at the age of sixty-two, much regretted, leaving a considerable family, three of which, if so many, are all who now survive; and of these the poet is the youngest.

Coleridge was educated at Christ's Hospital-school, London. The smallness of his father's living and large family rendered the strictest economy necessary. At this excellent seminary he was soon discovered to be a boy of talent, eccentric but acute. According to his own statement the master, the Rev. J. Bowyer, was a severe disciplinarian after the inane practice of English grammar-school modes, but was fond of encouraging genius, even in the lads he flagellated most unmercifully. He taught with assiduity, and directed the taste of youth to the beauties of the better classical authors, and to comparisons of one with another. «He habituated me,» says Coleridge, «to compare Lucretius, Terence, and above all the chaste poems of Catullus, not only with the Roman poets of the so called silver and brazen ages, but with even those of the Augustan era; and, on grounds of plain sense and universal logic, to see and assert the superiority of the former, in the truth and nativeness both of their thoughts and diction. At the same time that we were studying the Greek tragic poets, he made us read Shakspeare and Milton as lessons; and they were the lessons too which required most time and trouble to bring up, so as to escape his censure. I learned from him that poetry, even that of the loftiest, and seemingly that of the wildest odes, had a logic of its own, as severe as that of science, and more difficult; because more subtle and complex, and dependent on more and more fugitive causes. In our English compositions (at least for the last three years of our school education) he showed no mercy to phrase, image, or metaphor, unsupported by a sound sense, or where the same sense might have been conveyed with equal force and dignity in plainer words. Lute, harp, and lyre, muse, muses, and inspirations—Pegasus, Parnassus and Hippocrene, were all an abomination to him. In fancy, I can almost hear him now exclaiming—«Harp! harp! lyre! pen and ink, boy, you mean! muse, boy muse! your nurse's daughter, you mean! Pierian spring! O ay! the cloister pump, I suppose.» In his «Literary Life,» Coleridge has gone into the con-

duct of his master at great length; and, compared to the majority of pedagogues who ruled in grammar-schools at that time, he seems to have been a singular and most honourable exception among them. He sent his pupils to the university excellent Greek and Latin scholars, with some knowledge of Hebrew, and a considerable insight into the construction and beauties of their vernacular language and its most distinguished writers—a rare addition to their classical acquirements in such foundations.

It was owing to a present made to Coleridge of Bowles' sonnets by a school-fellow (the late Dr Middleton) while a boy of 17, that he was drawn away from theological controversy and wild metaphysics to the charms of poetry. He transcribed these sonnets no less than forty times in eighteen months, in order to make presents of them to his friends; and about the same period he wrote his *Ode to Chatterton*. « Nothing else,» he says, « pleased me; history and particular facts lost all interest in my mind.» Poetry had become insipid; all his ideas were directed to his favourite theological subjects and mysticisms, until Bowles' sonnets, and an acquaintance with a very agreeable family, recalled him to more pleasant paths, combined with perhaps far more of rational pursuits.

When eighteen years of age, Coleridge removed to Jesus College, Cambridge. It does not appear that he obtained or even struggled for academic honours. From excess of animal spirits, he was rather a noisy youth, whose general conduct was better than that of many of his fellow-collegians, and as good as most: his follies were more remarkable only as being those of a more remarkable personage; and if he could be accused of a vice, it must be sought for in the little attention he was inclined to pay to the dictates of sobriety. It is known that he assisted a friend in composing an essay on English poetry while at that University; that he was not unmindful of the muses himself while there; and that he regretted the loss of the leisure and quiet he had found within its precincts.

In the month of November, 1793, while labouring under a paroxysm of despair, brought on by the combined effects of pecuniary difficulties and love of a young lady, sister of a school-fellow, he set off for London with a party of collegians, and passed a short time there in joyous conviviality. On his return to Cambridge, he remained but a few days, and then abandoned it for ever. He again directed his steps towards the metropolis, and there, after indulging somewhat freely in the pleasures of the bottle, and wandering about the various streets and squares in a state of mind nearly approaching to phrenzy, he finished by enlisting in the 15th dragoons, under the name of Clumberbacht. Here he continued some time, the wonder of his comrades, and a subject of mystery and curiosity to his officers. While engaged in watching a sick comrade, which he did night and day, he is said to have got involved in a dispute with the regimental surgeon; but the disciple of Esculapius had no chance with the follower of the muses; he was astounded and put to flight by the profound erudition and astonishing eloquence of his antagonist. His friends at length found him out, and procured his discharge.

In 1794 Coleridge published a small volume of poems which were much praised by the critics of the time, though it appears they abounded in obscurities and epithets too common with young writers. He also published, in the same year, while residing at Bristol, « The Fall of Robespierre, an Historic Drama,» which displayed considerable talent. It was written in conjunction with Southey; and what is remarkable in this composition is, that they began it at 7 o'clock one evening, finished it the next day by 12 o'clock noon, and the day after it was printed and published. The language is vigorous, and the speeches are well put together and correctly versified. — Coleridge also, in the winter of that year, delivered a course of lectures on the French revolution, at Bristol.

On leaving the University, Coleridge was full of enthusiasm in the cause of freedom, and occupied with the idea of the regeneration of mankind. He found ardent coadjutors in the same enthusiastic undertaking in Robert Lovell and Robert Southey, the present courtly laureate. This youthful triumvirate proposed schemes for regenerating the world, even before their educations were completed; and dreamed of happy lives in aboriginal forests, republics on the Mississippi, and a newly-dreamed philanthropy. In order to carry their ideas into effect they began operations at Bristol, and were received with considerable applause by several inhabitants of that commercial city, which, however remarkable for traffic, has been frequently styled the Bœotia of the west of England. Here, in 1795, Coleridge published two pamphlets, one called « Consciones ad Populum, or addresses to the people;» the other, « A protest against certain bills (then pending) for suppressing seditious meetings.»

The charm of the political regeneration of nations, though thus warped for a moment, was not broken. Coleridge, Lovell and Southey, finding the old world would not be reformed after their mode, determined to try and found a new one, in which all was to be liberty and happiness. The deep woods of America were to be the site of

this new-golden region. There all the evils of European society were to be remedied, property was to be in common, and every man a legislator. The name of «Pantisocracy» was bestowed upon the favoured scheme, while yet it existed only in imagination. Unborn ages of human happiness presented themselves before the triad of philosophical founders of Utopian empires, while they were dreaming of human perfectibility:—a harmless dream at least, and an aspiration after better things than life's realities, which is the best that can be said for it. In the midst of these plans of vast import, the three philosophers fell in love with three sisters of Bristol, named Fricker (one of them, afterwards Mrs Lovell, an actress of the Bristol theatre, another a mantua-maker, and the third kept a day-school), and all their visions of immortal freedom faded into thin air. They married, and occupied themselves with the increase of the corrupt race of the old world, instead of peopling the new. Thus, unhappily for America and mankind, failed the scheme of the Pantisocracy, on which at one time so much of human happiness and political regeneration was by its founders believed to depend. None have revived the phantasy since; but Coleridge has lived to sober down his early extravagant views of political freedom into something like a disavowal of having held them; but he has never changed into a foe of the generous principles of human freedom, which he ever espoused; while Southey has become the enemy of political and religious freedom, the supporter and advocate of arbitrary measures in church and state, and the vituperator of all who support the recorded principles of his early years.

About this time, and with the same object, namely, to spread the principles of true liberty, Coleridge began a weekly paper called «The Watchman,» which only reached its ninth number, though the editor set out on his travels to procure subscribers among the friends of the doctrines he espoused, and visited Birmingham, Manchester, Derby, Nottingham, and Sheffield, for the purpose. The failure of this paper was a severe mortification to the projector. No ground was gained on the score of liberty, though about the same time his self-love was flattered by the success of a volume of poems, which he republished, with some communications from his friends Lamb and Lloyd.

Coleridge married Miss Sarah Fricker in the autumn of 1795, and in the following year his eldest son, Hartley, was born. Two more sons, Berkley and Derwent, were the fruits of this union. In 1797, he resided at Nether Stowey, a village near Bridgewater, in Somersetshire, and wrote there in the spring, at the desire of Sheridan, a tragedy which was, in 1813, brought out under the title of «Remorse:» the name it originally bore was Osorio. There were some circumstances in this business that led to a suspicion of Sheridan's not having acted with any great regard to truth or feeling. During his residence here Coleridge was in the habit of preaching every Sunday at the Unitarian Chapel in Taunton, and was greatly respected by the better class of his neighbours. He enjoyed the friendship of Wordsworth, who lived at Allfoxden, about two miles from Stowey, and was occasionally visited by Charles Lamb, John Thelwall, and other congenial spirits. «The Brook,» a poem that he planned about this period, was never completed.

Coleridge had married before he possessed the means of supporting a family, and he depended principally for subsistence, at Stowey, upon his literary labours, the remuneration for which could be but scanty. At length, in 1798, the kind patronage of the late Thomas Wedgwood, Esq., who granted him a pension of 100*l.* a-year, enabled him to plan a visit to Germany; to which country he proceeded with Wordsworth, and studied the language at Ratzeburg, and then went to Gottingen. He there attended the lectures of Blumenbach on natural history and physiology, and the lectures of Eichhorn on the New Testament; and from professor Tychven he learned the Gothic grammar. He read the Minnesinger and the verses of Hans Sachs, the Nuremberg cobbler, but his time was principally devoted to literature and philosophy. At the end of his «Biographia Literaria» Coleridge has published some letters, which relate to his sojourn in Germany. He sailed, September 16th 1798, and on the 19th landed at Hamburgh. It was on the 20th of the same month that he says he was introduced to the brother of the great poet Klopstock, to professor Ebeling, and ultimately to the poet himself. He had an impression of awe on his spirits when he set out to visit the German Milton, whose humble house stood about a quarter of a mile from the city gate. He was much disappointed in the countenance of Klopstock, which was inexpressive, and without peculiarity in any of the features. Klopstock was lively and courteous; talked of Milton and Glover, and preferred the verse of the latter to the former,—a very curious mistake, but natural enough in a foreigner. He spoke with indignation of the English translations of his Messiah. He said his first ode was fifty years older than his last, and hoped Coleridge would revenge him on Englishmen by translating the Messiah.

On his return from Germany, Coleridge went to

reside at Keswick, in Cumberland. He had made a great addition to his stock of knowledge, and he seems to have spared no pains to store up what was either useful or speculative. He had become master of most of the early German writers, or rather of the state of early German literature. He dived deeply into the mystical stream of Teutonic philosophy. There the predilections of his earlier years no doubt came upon him in aid of his researches into a labyrinth which no human clue will ever unravel; or which, were one found capable of so doing, would reveal a mighty nothing. Long, he says, while meditating in England, had his heart been with Paul and John, and his head with Spinoza. He then became convinced of the doctrine of St Paul, and from an antitrinitarian became a believer in the Trinity, and in Christianity as commonly received; or, to use his own word, found a « re-conversion.» Yet, for all his arguments on the subject, he had better have retained his early creed, and saved the time wasted in travelling back to exactly the same point where he set out, for he finds that faith necessary at last which he had been taught in his church, was necessary at his first outset in life. His arguments, *pro* and *con*, not being of use to any of the community, and the exclusive property of their owner, he had only to look back upon his laborious trifling, as Grotius did upon his own toils, when death was upon him. Metaphysics are most unprofitable things; as political economists say, their labours are of the most « unproductive class » in the community of thinkers.

The next step of our poet in a life which seems to have had no settled object, but to have been steered compassless along, was to undertake the political and literary departments of the Morning Post newspaper, and in the duties of this situation he was engaged in the spring of 1802. No man was less fitted for a popular writer; and, in common with his early connections, Coleridge seems to have had no fixed political principles that the public could understand, though he perhaps was able to reconcile in his own bosom all that others might imagine contradictory, and no doubt he did so conscientiously. His style and manner of writing, the learning and depth of his disquisitions for ever came into play, and rendered him unintelligible, or, what is equally fatal, unreadable to the mass. It was singular too, that he disclosed in his biography so strongly his unsettled political principles, which showed that he had not studied politics as he had studied poetry, Kant, and theology. The public of each party looks upon a political writer as a sort of champion around whom it rallies, and feels it impossible to trust the changeable leader, or applaud the addresses of him who is inconsistent or wavering in principles: it will not back out any but the firm unflinching partisan. In truth, what an ill compliment do men pay to their own judgment, when they run counter to, and shift about from points they have declared in indelible ink are founded on truth and reason irrefutable and eternal! They must either have been superficial smatterers in what they first promulgated, and have appeared prematurely in print, or they must be tinctured with something like the hue of uncrimsoned apostacy. The members of what is called the « Lake School» have been more or less strongly marked with this reprehensible change of political creed, but Coleridge the least of them. In truth he got nothing by any change he ventured upon, and, what is more, he expected nothing; the world is therefore bound to say of him what cannot be said of his friends, if it be true, that it believes most cordially in his sincerity—and that his obliquity in politics was caused by his superficial knowledge of them, and his devotion of his high mental powers to different questions. Notwithstanding this, those who will not make a candid allowance for him, have expressed wonder how the author of the « *Consciones ad Populum*,» and the « Watchman,» the friend of freedom, and one of the founders of the Pantisocracy, could afterwards regard the drivelling and chicanery of the pettifogging minister, Perceval, as glorious in British political history, and he himself as the « best and wisest» of ministers! Although Coleridge has avowed his belief that he is not calculated for a popular writer, he has endeavoured to show that his own writings in the Morning Post were greatly influential on the public mind. Coleridge himself confesses that his Morning Post essays, though written in defence or furtherance of the measures of the government, added nothing to his fortune or reputation. How should they be effective, when their writer, who not long before addressed the people, and echoed from his compositions the principles of freedom and the rights of the people, now wrote with scorn of « mob-sycophants,» and of the « half-witted vulgar?» It is a consolation to know that our author himself laments the waste of his manhood and intellect in this way. What might he not have given to the world that is enduring and admirable, in the room of these misplaced political lucubrations! Who that has read his better works will not subscribe to this truth?

His translation of Schiller's Wallenstein may be denominated a free one, and is finely executed. It is impossible to give in the English langua ge a

more effective idea of the work of the great German dramatist. This version was made from a copy which the author himself afterwards revised and altered, and the translator subsequently republished his version in a more correct form, with the additional passages and alterations of Schiller. This translation will long remain as the most effective which has been achieved of the works of the German dramatists in the British tongue.

The censure which has been cast upon our poet for not writing more which is worthy of his reputation, has been met by his enumeration of what he has done in all ways and times; and, in truth, he has written a vast deal which has passed unnoticed, upon fleeting politics, and in newspaper columns, literary as well as political. To the world these last go for nothing, though their author calculates the thought and labour they cost him at full value. He concedes something, however, to this prevailing idea respecting him, when he says, « On my own account, I may perhaps have had sufficient reason to lament my deficiency in self-control, and the neglect of concentrating my powers to the realization of some permanent work. But to verse, rather than to prose, if to either, belongs 'the voice of mourning,' for

> Keen pangs of love awakening as a babe
> Turbulent, with an outcry in the heart,
> And fears self-will'd that shunn'd the eye of hope,
> And hope that scarce could know itself from fear;
> Sense of past youth, and manhood come in vain,
> And genius given and knowledge won in vain,
> And all which I had cull'd in wood-walks wild,
> And all which patient toil had rear'd, and all
> Commune with thee had open'd out—but flowers
> Strew'd on my corpse, and borne upon my bier,
> In the same coffin, for the self-same grave!
> S. T. C.»

In another part of his works, Coleridge says, speaking of what in poetry he had written, « as to myself, I have published so little, and that little of so little importance, as to make it almost ludicrous to mention my name at all.» It is evident, therefore, that a sense of what he might have done for fame, and of the little he has done, is felt by the poet; and yet, the little he has produced has among it gems of the purest lustre, the brilliancy of which time will not deaden until the universal voice of nature be heard no longer, and poetry perish beneath the dull load of life's hacknied realities.

The poem of « Christabel,» Coleridge says, was composed in consequence of an agreement with Mr Wordsworth, that they should mutually produce specimens of poetry which should contain « the power of exciting the sympathy of the reader, by a faithful adherence to the truth of nature, and the power of giving the interest of novelty by the modifying colours of imagination. The sudden charm, which accidents of light and shade, which moon-light or sun-set diffused over a known and familiar landscape, appeared to represent the practicability of combining both.» Further he observes on this thought, « that a series of poems might be composed of two sorts. In the one, the incidents and agents were to be, in part at least, supernatural; and the excellence to be aimed at was to consist in the interesting of the affections by the dramatic truth of such emotions as would naturally accompany such situations, supposing them real, etc. For the second class, subjects were to be chosen from ordinary life.» Thus, it appears, originated the poems of the « Ancient Mariner,» and « Christabel,» by Coleridge, and the « Lyrical Ballads» of Wordsworth.

Perhaps there is no English writer living who understood better than Coleridge the elements of poetry, and the way in which they may be best combined to produce certain impressions. His definitions of the merits and differences in style and poetic genius, between the earliest and latest writers of his country, are superior to those which any one else has it in his power to make; for, in truth, he long and deeply meditated upon them, and no one can be dissatisfied by the reasons he gives, and the examples he furnishes to bear out his theories and opinions. These things he does as well or better in conversation than in writing. His conversational powers are indeed unrivalled, and it is to be feared that, to excel in these, he has sacrificed what are more durable; and that he has resigned, for the pleasure of gratifying an attentive listening circle, and pleasing thereby his self-love by its applause, much that would have delighted the world. His flow of words, delivery, and variety of information are so great, and he finds it so captivating to enchain his auditors to the car of his triumphant eloquence, that he has sacrificed to this gratification what might have sufficed to confer upon him a celebrity a thousand times more to be coveted by a spirit akin to his own.

It is equally creditable to the taste and judgment of Coleridge, that he was one of the first to point out, with temper and sound reasoning, the fallacy of a great portion of Wordsworth's poetic theory, namely, that which relates to low life. Wordsworth contends that a proper poetic diction is a language taken from the mouths of men in general, in their natural conversation under the influence of natural feelings. Coleridge wisely asserts, that philosophers are the authors of the best

parts of language, not clowns; and that Milton's language is more that of real life than the language of a cottager. This subject he has most ably treated in chapter 17 of his *Biographia Literaria*.

Two years after he had abandoned the Morning Post, he set off for Malta, where he most unexpectedly arrived on a visit to his friend Dr Stodart, then king's advocate in that island, and was introduced by him to the Governor, Sir Alexander Ball, who appointed him his secretary. He remained in the island fulfilling the duties of his situation, for which he seems to have been but indifferently qualified, a very short period. One advantage, however, he derived from his official employ: that of the pension granted by Government to those who have served in similar situations. On his way home he visited Italy; entered Rome, and examined its host of ancient and modern curiosities, and added fresh matter for thought to his rapidly accumulating store of ideas. Of this visit he gives several anecdotes; among them one respecting the horns of Moses on Michael Angelo's celebrated statue of that lawgiver, intended to elucidate the character of Frenchmen. Coleridge has been all his life a hater of France and Frenchmen, arising from his belief in their being completely destitute of moral or poetical feeling. A Prussian, who was with him while looking upon the statue, observed that a Frenchman was the only animal, « in the human shape, that by no possibility can lift itself up to religion or poetry.» A foolish and untrue remark on the countrymen of Fenelon and Pascal, of Massillon and Corneille. Just then, however, two French officers of rank happened to enter the church, and the Goth from the Elbe remarked that, the first things they would notice would be the « horns and beard» (upon which the Prussian and Coleridge had just been rearing theories and quoting history), and that the associations the Frenchmen would connect with them « would be those of a he-goat and a cuckold.» It happened that the Prus-Goth was right: the officers did pass some such joke upon the figure. Hence, by inference, would the poet have his readers deduce the character of a people, whose literature, science, and civilization are perhaps only not the very first in the world.

Another instance of his fixed and absurd dislike of every thing French, occurred during the delivery of a course of Lectures on Poetry, at the Royal Institution, in the spring of 1808; in one of which he astonished his auditory by thanking his Maker, in the most serious manner, for so ordering events, that he was totally ignorant of a single word of « that frightful jargon, the French language!» And yet, notwithstanding this public avowal of his entire ignorance of the language, Mr C. is said to have been in the habit, while conversing with his friends, of expressing the utmost contempt for the literature of that country!

Whelmed in the wild mazes of metaphysics, and for ever mingling its speculations with all he does or says, Coleridge has of late produced nothing equal to the power of his pen. A few verses in an annual, or a sonnet in a magazine, are the utmost of his efforts. He resides at Hampstead, in the house of a friend having a good garden, where he walks for hours together enwrapped in visions of new theories of theology, or upon the most abstruse of meditations. He goes into the world at times, to the social dinner-party, where he gratifies his self-love by pouring out the stores of his mind in conversation to admiring listeners. Were he not apt to be too profound, he would make an excellent talker, or rather *un grand causeur* for a second Madame de Sévigné, if such an accomplished female is to be found in the nineteenth century, either in England or France. The fluency of Coleridge's language, the light he throws upon his subjects, and the pleasure he feels in communicating his ideas, and his knowledge, innate or acquired, are equally remarkable to the stranger. He has been accused of indolence, not perhaps with reason: the misdirection of his distinguished talents would be a better explanation of that for which he has been blameable. He attempts to justify himself on the score of quantity, by asserting that some of his best things were published in newspapers. The world differs with him upon this question, and always will do so, when it is recollected what he has had the power to effect. It will not forgive him for writing upon party, and in support of principles that even now are pretty nearly exploded, « what was meant for mankind.» Coleridge mistook his walk when he set up for a politician, and it is to be feared the public have a great deal to regret on account of it. He will not be known hereafter by his Morning Post articles, but by his verses. Whatever pains his political papers may have cost him, and from his own account they were laboriously composed, they will avail him nothing with posterity. The verses of Coleridge give him his claim to lasting celebrity, and it is in vain that he would have the world think otherwise. He says, « Would that the criterion of a scholar's utility were the number and moral value of the truths which he has been the means of throwing into the general circulation, or the number and value of the minds whom, by his conversation or letters, he has excited into activity, and supplied with the germs of

their after-growth! A distinguished rank might not indeed then be awarded to my exertions, but I should dare look forward to an honourable acquittal.»

In temper and disposition Coleridge is kind and amiable. His person is bulky and his physiognomy is heavy, but his eye is remarkably fine; and neither envy nor uncharitableness have made any successful impression in attacking his moral character. His family have long resided with Mr Southey's in the north of England; the narrow pecuniary circumstances of our poet are assigned as the reason. It is arduously desired by all lovers of the Muses, that the author of the «Ancient Mariner,» and of «Geneviève,» may see life protracted to a green old age, and yet produce works which may rival those of his departed years.

THE

POETICAL WORKS

OF

SAMUEL T. COLERIDGE.

Juvenile Poems.

PREFACE.

Compositions resembling those here collected are not unfrequently condemned for their querulous Egotism. But Egotism is to be condemned then only when it offends against time and place, as in a History or an Epic Poem. To censure it in a Monody or Sonnet is almost as absurd as to dislike a circle for being round. Why then write Sonnets or Monodies? Because they give me pleasure when perhaps nothing else could. After the more violent emotions of Sorrow, the mind demands amusement, and can find it in employment alone: but, full of its late sufferings, it can endure no employment not in some measure connected with them. Forcibly to turn away our attention to general subjects is a painful and most often an unavailing effort.

> But O! how grateful to a wounded heart
> The tale of Misery to impart—
> From others' eyes bid artless sorrows flow,
> And raise esteem upon the base of Woe!
>
> Shaw.

The communicativeness of our Nature leads us to describe our own sorrows; in the endeavour to describe them, intellectual activity is exerted; and from intellectual activity there results a pleasure, which is gradually associated, and mingles as a corrective, with the painful subject of the description. «True!» (it may be answered) «but how are the Public interested in your Sorrows or your Description?» We are for ever attributing personal Unities to imaginary Aggregates. What is the Public, but a term for a number of scattered individuals? Of whom as many will be interested in these sorrows, as have experienced the same or similar.

> Holy be the lay
> Which mourning soothes the mourner on his way.

If I could judge of others by myself, I should not hesitate to affirm, that the most interesting passages are those in which the Author develops his own feelings? The sweet voice of Cona[1] never sounds so sweetly, as when it speaks of itself; and I should almost suspect that man of an unkindly heart, who could read the opening of the third book of the Paradise Lost without peculiar emotion. By a Law of our Nature, he, who labours under a strong feeling, is impelled to seek for sympathy; but a Poet's feelings are all strong. *Quicquid amet valde amat.* Akenside therefore speaks with philosophical accuracy when he classes Love and Poetry, as producing the same effects:

> Love and the wish of Poets when their tongue
> Would teach to others' bosoms, what so charms
> Their own.
>
> *Pleasures of Imagination.*

There is one species of Egotism which is truly disgusting; not that which leads us to communicate our feelings to others, but that which would reduce the feelings of others to an identity with our own. The Atheist, who exclaims «pshaw!» when he glances his eye on the praises of Deity, is an Egotist: an old man, when he speaks contemptuously of Love-verses, is an Egotist: and the sleek Favourites of Fortune are Egotists, when they condemn all «melancholy, discontented» verses. Surely, it would be candid not merely to ask whether the poem pleases ourselves, but to consider whether or no there may not be others, to whom it is well calculated to give an innocent pleasure.

I shall only add, that each of my readers will, I hope, remember, that these Poems on various subjects, which he reads at one time and under the influence of one set of feelings, were written at different times and prompted by very different feelings; and therefore that the supposed inferiority of one Poem to another may sometimes be owing to the temper of mind in which he happens to peruse it.

My poems have been rightly charged with a profusion of double-epithets, and a general turgidness I have pruned the double-epithets with no sparing hand; and used my best efforts to tame the swell and glitter both of thought and diction.[1] This latter fault however had

[1] Ossian.

[1] Without any feeling of anger, I may yet be allowed to express some degree of surprise, that after having run the critical gauntlet for a certain class of faults, which I had, viz. a too ornate, and elaborately poetic diction, and nothing having come before the judgment-seat of the Reviewers during the long interval, I should for at least seventeen years, quarter after quarter, have been placed by them in the foremost rank of the *proscribed*, and made to abide the brunt of abuse and ridicule for faults directly opposite, viz. bald and prosaic language, and an affected simplicity both of matter and manner—faults which assuredly did not enter into the character of my compositions.—*Literary Life*, i, 51. Published 1817.

insinuated itself into my Religious Musings with such intricacy of union, that sometimes I have omitted to disentangle the weed from the fear of snapping the flower. A third and heavier accusation has been brought against me, that of obscurity; but not, I think, with equal justice. An Author is obscure, when his conceptions are dim and imperfect, and his language incorrect, or unappropriate, or involved. A poem that abounds in allusions, like the Bard of Gray, or one that impersonates high and abstract truths, like Collins's Ode on the poetical character, claims not to be popular—but should be acquitted of obscurity. The deficiency is in the Reader. But this is a charge which every poet, whose imagination is warm and rapid, must expect from his *contemporaries*. Milton did not escape it; and it was adduced with virulence against Gray and Collins. We now hear no more of it: not that their poems are better understood at present, than they were at their first publication; but their fame is established; and a critic would accuse himself of frigidity or inattention, who should profess not to understand them. But a living writer is yet *sub judice*; and if we cannot follow his conceptions or enter into his feelings, it is more consoling to our pride to consider him as lost beneath, than as soaring above us. If any man expect from my poems the same easiness of style which he admires in a drinking-song, for him I have not written. *Intelligibilia, non intellectum adfero.*

I expect neither profit or general fame by my writings; and I consider myself as having been amply repaid without either. Poetry has been to me its own "exceeding great reward:" it has soothed my afflictions; it has multiplied and refined my enjoyments; it has endeared solitude: and it has given me the habit of wishing to discover the Good and the Beautiful in all that meets and surrounds me.

S. T. C.

JUVENILE POEMS.

GENEVIEVE.

Maid of my Love, sweet Genevieve!
In beauty's light you glide along:
Your eye is like the star of eve,
And sweet your voice, as seraph's song.
Yet not your heavenly beauty gives
This heart with passion soft to glow:
Within your soul a voice there lives!
It bids you hear the tale of woe.
When sinking low the sufferer wan
Beholds no hand outstretch'd to save,
Fair, as the bosom of the swan
That rises graceful o'er the wave,
I've seen your breast with pity heave,
And *therefore* love I you, sweet Genevieve!

SONNET.

TO THE AUTUMNAL MOON.

Mild Splendour of the various-vested Night!
Mother of wildly-working visions! hail!
I watch thy gliding, while with watery light
Thy weak eye glimmers through a fleecy veil;
And when thou lovest thy pale orb to shroud
Behind the gathered blackness lost on high;
And when thou dartest from the wind-rent cloud
Thy placid lightning o'er the awaken'd sky.
Ah such is Hope! as changeful and as fair!
Now dimly peering on the wistful sight;
Now hid behind the dragon-wing'd Despair:
But soon emerging in her radiant might,
She o'er the sorrow-clouded breast of Care
Sails, like a meteor kindling in its flight.

TIME, REAL AND IMAGINARY.

AN ALLEGORY.

On the wide level of a mountain's head
(I knew not where, but 't was some faery place)
Their pinions, ostrich-like, for sails outspread,
Two lovely children run an endless race,
A sister and a brother!
This far outstript the other;
Yet ever runs she with reverted face,
And looks and listens for the boy behind:
For he, alas! is blind!
O'er rough and smooth with even step he pass'd,
And knows not whether he be first or last.

MONODY ON THE DEATH OF CHATTERTON.

O what a wonder seems the fear of death,
Seeing how gladly we all sink to sleep,
Babes, Children, Youths and Men,
Night following night for threescore years and ten!
But doubly strange, where life is but a breath
To sigh and pant with, up Want's rugged steep.

Away, Grim Phantom! Scorpion King, away!
Reserve thy terrors and thy stings display
For coward Wealth and Guilt in robes of state!
Lo! by the grave I stand of one, for whom
A prodigal Nature and a niggard Doom
(*That* all bestowing, *this* withholding all)
Made each chance knell from distant spire or dome
Sound like a seeking Mother's anxious call,
Return, poor Child! Home, weary Truant home!

Thee, Chatterton! these unblest stones protect
From want, and the bleak freezings of neglect.
Too long before the vexing Storm-blast driven
Here hast thou found repose! beneath this sod!
Thou! O vain word! *thou* dwell'st not with the clod!
Amid the shining Host of the Forgiven
Thou at the throne of Mercy and thy God
The triumph of redeeming Love dost hymn
(Believe it, O my soul!) to harps of Seraphim.

Yet oft, perforce ('t is suffering Nature's call),
I weep, that heaven-born Genius *so* shall fall;
And oft, in Fancy's saddest hour, my soul
Averted shudders at the poison'd bowl.
Now groans my sickening heart, as still I view
Thy corse of livid hue;
Now indignation checks the feeble sigh,
Or flashes through the tear that glistens in mine eye!

Is this the land of song-ennobled line?
Is this the land, where Genius ne'er in vain
Pour'd forth his lofty strain?
Ah me! yet Spenser, gentlest bard divine,
Beneath chill Disappointment's shade
His weary limbs in lonely anguish laid.
And o'er her darling dead
Pity hopeless hung her head,
While 'mid the pelting of that merciless storm,'
Sunk to the cold earth Otway's famish'd form!

Sublime of thought, and confident of fame,
From vales where Avon winds, the Minstrel[1] came.
Light-hearted youth! aye, as he hastes along,
He meditates the future song,
How dauntless Ælla fray'd the Dacyan foe;
And while the numbers flowing strong
In eddies whirl, in surges throng,
Exulting in the spirits' genial throe
In tides of power his life-blood seems to flow.

And now his cheeks with deeper ardors flame,
His eyes have glorious meanings, that declare
More than the light of outward day shines there,
A holier triumph and a sterner aim!
Wings grow within him; and he soars above
Or Bard's, or Minstrel's lay of war or love.
Friend to the friendless, to the Sufferer health,
He hears the widow's prayer, the good man's praise;
To scenes of bliss transmutes his fancied wealth,
And young and old shall now see happy days.
On many a waste he bids trim gardens rise,
Gives the blue sky to many a prisoner's eyes;
And now in wrath he grasps the patriot steel,
And her own iron rod he makes Oppression feel.

Sweet Flower of Hope! free Nature's genial child!
That didst so fair disclose thy early bloom,
Filling the wide air with a rich perfume!
For thee in vain all heavenly aspects smiled;
From the hard world brief respite could they win—
The frost nipp'd sharp without, the canker prey'd within!
Ah! where are fled the charms of vernal Grace,
And Joy's wild gleams that lightened o'er thy face?
Youth of tumultuous soul, and haggard eye!
Thy wasted form, thy hurried steps I view,
On thy wan forehead starts the lethal dew,
And oh! the anguish of that shuddering sigh!

Such were the struggles of the gloomy hour,
When Care, of wither'd brow,
Prepared the poison's death-cold power:
Already to thy lips was raised the bowl,
When near thee stood Affection meek
(Her bosom bare, and wildly pale her cheek),
Thy sullen gaze she bade thee roll
On scenes that well might melt thy soul;
Thy native cot she flash'd upon thy view,
Thy native cot, where still, at close of day,
Peace smiling sate, and listen'd to thy lay;
Thy Sister's shrieks she bade thee hear,
And mark thy Mother's thrilling tear;
See, see her breast's convulsive throe,
Her silent agony of woe!
Ah! dash the poison'd chalice from thy hand!

[1] Avon, a river near Bristol; the birth-place of Chatterton.

And thou hadst dash'd it, at her soft command,
But that Despair and Indignation rose,
And told again the story of thy woes;
Told the keen insult of the unfeeling heart;
The dread dependence on the low-born mind;
Told every pang, with which thy soul must smart,
Neglect, and grinning Scorn, and Want combined!
Recoiling quick, thou bad'st the friend of pain
Roll the black tide of Death through every freezing vein!

Ye woods! that wave o'er Avon's rocky steep,
To Fancy's ear sweet is your murmuring deep!
For here she loves the cypress wreath to weave
Watching, with wistful eye, the saddening tints of eve.
Here, far from men, amid this pathless grove,
In solemn thought the Minstrel wont to rove,
Like star-beam on the slow sequester'd tide
Lone-glittering, through the high tree branching wide.
And here, in Inspiration's eager hour,
When most the big soul feels the mastering power,
These wilds, these caverns roaming o'er,
Round which the screaming sea-gulls soar,
With wild unequal steps he pass'd along,
Oft pouring on the winds a broken song:
Anon, upon some rough rock's fearful brow
Would pause abrupt—and gaze upon the waves below.

Poor Chatterton! *he* sorrows for thy fate
Who would have praised and loved thee, ere too late.
Poor Chatterton! farewell! of darkest hues
This chaplet cast I on thy unshaped tomb;
But dare no longer on the sad theme muse,
Lest kindred woes persuade a kindred doom:
For oh! big gall-drops, shook from Folly's wing,
Have blacken'd the fair promise of my spring;
And the stern Fate transpierced with viewless dart
The last pale Hope that shiver'd at my heart!

Hence, gloomy thoughts! no more my soul shall dwell
On joys that were! No more endure to weigh
The shame and anguish of the evil day,
Wisely forgetful! O'er the ocean swell
Sublime of Hope I seek the cottaged dell,
Where Virtue calm with careless step may stray;
And, dancing to the moon-light roundelay,
The wizard Passions weave a holy spell!

O Chatterton! that thou wert yet alive!
Sure thou wouldst spread the canvas to the gale,
And love, with us the tinkling team to drive
O'er peaceful Freedom's undivided dale;
And we, at sober eve, would round thee throng,
Hanging, enraptured, on thy stately song!
And greet with smiles the young-eyed Poesy
All deftly mask'd, as hoar Antiquity.

Alas vain Phantasies! the fleeting brood
Of Woe self-solaced in her dreamy mood!
Yet will I love to follow the sweet dream,
Where Susquehannah pours his untamed stream;
And on some hill, whose forest-frowning side
Waves o'er the murmurs of his calmer tide,
Will raise a solemn Cenotaph to thee,
Sweet Harper of time-shrouded Minstrelsy!
And there, soothed sadly by the dirgeful wind,
Muse on the sore ills I had left behind.

SONGS OF THE PIXIES.

The Pixies, in the superstition of Devonshire, are a race of beings invisibly small, and harmless or friendly to man. At a small distance from a village in that county, half way up a wood-covered hill, is an excavation called the Pixies' Parlour. The roots of old trees form its ceiling; and on its sides are innumerable cyphers, among which the author discovered his own cypher and those of his brothers, cut by the hand of their childhood. At the foot of the hill flows the river Otter.

To this place the Author conducted a party of young Ladies, during the Summer months of the year 1793; one of whom, of stature elegantly small, and of complexion colourless yet clear, was proclaimed the Faery Queen. On which occasion the following Irregular Ode was written.

I.

WHOM the untaught Shepherds call
Pixies in their madrigal,
Fancy's children, here we dwell:
Welcome, Ladies! to our cell.
Here the wren of softest note
Builds its nest and warbles well;
Here the blackbird strains his throat;
Welcome, Ladies! to our cell.

II.

When fades the moon all shadowy-pale
And scuds the cloud before the gale,
Ere Morn with living gems bedight
Purples the East with streaky light,
We sip the furze-flower's fragrant dews,
Clad in robes of rainbow hues:
Or sport amid the rosy gleam
Soothed by the distant-tinkling team,
While lusty Labour scouting sorrow
Bids the Dame a glad good-morrow,
Who jogs the accustom'd road along,
And paces cheery to her cheering song.

III.

But not our filmy pinion
We scorch amid the blaze of day,
When Noontide's fiery-tressed minion
Flashes the fervid ray.
Aye from the sultry heat
We to the cave retreat
O'ercanopied by huge roots intertwined
With wildest texture, blacken'd o'er with age:
Round them their mantle green the ivies bind,
Beneath whose foliage pale,
Fann'd by the unfrequent gale,
We shield us from the Tyrant's mid-day rage.

IV.

Thither, while the murmuring throng
Of wild-bees hum their drowsy song,
By Indolence and Fancy brought,
A youthful Bard, «unknown to Fame,»
Wooes the Queen of Solemn Thought,
And heaves the gentle misery of a sigh,
Gazing with tearful eye,
As round our sandy grot appear
Many a rudely sculptured name
To pensive Memory dear!
Weaving gay dreams of sunny-tinctured hue
We glance before his view:
O'er his hush'd soul our soothing witcheries shed,
And twine our faery garlands round his head.

V.

When Evening's dusky car,
Crown'd with her dewy star,
Steals o'er the fading sky in shadowy flight,
On leaves of aspen trees
We tremble to the breeze,
Veiled from the grosser ken of mortal sight.
Or, haply, at the visionary hour,
Along our wildly-bower'd sequester'd walk,
We listen to the enamour'd rustic's talk;
Heave with the heavings of the maiden's breast,
Where young-eyed Loves have built their turtle nest;
Or guide of soul-subduing power
The electric flash, that from the melting eye
Darts the fond question and the soft reply.

VI.

Or through the mystic ringlets of the vale
We flash our faery feet in gamesome prank;
Or, silent-sandal'd, pay our defter court
Circling the Spirit of the Western Gale,
Where wearied with his flower-caressing sport,
Supine he slumbers on a violet bank;
Then with quaint music hymn the parting gleam
By lonely Otter's sleep-persuading stream;
Or where his wave with loud unquiet song
Dash'd o'er the rocky channel froth along;
Or where, his silver waters smoothed to rest,
The tall tree's shadow sleeps upon his breast.

VII.

Hence thou lingerer, Light!
Eve saddens into Night.
Mother of wildly-working dreams! we view
The sombre hours, that round thee stand
With down-cast eyes (a duteous band)!
Their dark robes dripping with the heavy dew.
Soreeress of the ebon throne!
Thy power the Pixies own,
When round thy raven brow
Heaven's lucent roses glow,
And clouds in watery colours drest,
Float in light drapery o'er thy sable vest:
What time the pale moon sheds a softer day,
Mellowing the woods beneath its pensive beam:
For 'mid the quivering light 't is ours to play,
Aye dancing to the cadence of the stream.

VIII.

Welcome, Ladies! to the cell
Where the blameless Pixies dwell:
But thou, sweet Nymph! proclaim'd our Faery Queen,
With what obeisance meet
Thy presence shall we greet?
For lo! attendant on thy steps are seen
Graceful Ease in artless stole,
And white-robed Purity of soul,
With Honour's softer mien;
Mirth of the loosely-flowing hair,
And meek-eyed Pity eloquently fair,
Whose tearful cheeks are lovely to the view,
As snow-drop wet with dew.

IX.

Unboastful Maid! though now the Lily pale
Transparent grace thy beauties meek;
Yet ere again along the empurpling vale,
The purpling vale and elfin-haunted grove,
Young Zephyr his fresh flowers profusely throws,
We 'll tinge with livelier hues thy cheek;
And, haply, from the nectar-breathing Rose
Extract a Blush for Love!

THE RAVEN.

A CHRISTMAS TALE, TOLD BY A SCHOOL-BOY TO HIS LITTLE BROTHERS AND SISTERS.

Underneath a huge oak tree
There was, of swine, a huge company,
That grunted as they crunch'd the mast:
For that was ripe, and fell full fast.
Then they trotted away, for the wind grew high:
One acorn they left, and no more might you spy.
Next came a raven, that liked not such folly:
He belong'd, they did say, to the witch Melancholy!
Blacker was he than blackest jet,
Flew low in the rain, and his feathers not wet.
He pick'd up the acorn and buried it straight
By the side of a river both deep and great.
Where then did the Raven go?
He went high and low,
Over hill, over dale, did the black Raven go.
Many Autumns, many Springs
Travell'd he with wandering wings:
Many Summers, many Winters—
I can't tell half his adventures.

At length he came back, and with him a She,
And the acorn was grown to a tall oak tree.
They built them a nest in the topmost bough,
And young ones they had, and were happy enow.
But soon came a woodman in leathern guise,
His brow, like a pent-house, hung over his eyes.
He 'd an axe in his hand, not a word he spoke,
But with many a hem! and a sturdy stroke,
At length he brought down the poor Raven's own oak.
His young ones were kill'd; for they could not depart,
And their mother did die of a broken heart.

The boughs from the trunk the woodman did sever;
And they floated it down on the course of the river.
They saw'd it in planks, and its bark they did strip,
And with this tree and others they made a good ship.
The ship it was launch'd; but in sight of the land
Such a storm there did rise as no ship could withstand.
It bulged on a rock, and the waves rush'd in fast:
The old Raven flew round and round, and caw'd to the blast.

He heard the last shriek of the perishing souls—
See! see! o'er the topmast the mad water rolls!
Right glad was the Raven, and off he went fleet,
And Death riding home on a cloud he did meet,
And he thank'd him again and again for this treat:
They had taken his all, and Revenge was sweet!

ABSENCE.

A FAREWELL ODE ON QUITTING SCHOOL FOR JESUS COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

Where graced with many a classic spoil
Cam rolls his reverend stream along,
I haste to urge the learnad toil
That sternly chides my love-lorn song:
Ah me! too mindful of the days
Illumed by Passion's orient rays,
When Peace, and Cheerfulness, and Health
Enrich'd me with the best of wealth.

Ah fair delights! that o'er my soul
On Memory's wing, like shadows fly!
Ah Flowers! which Joy from Eden stole
While Innocence stood smiling by!—
But cease, fond heart! this bootless moan:
Those hours on rapid pinions flown
Shall yet return, by Absence crown'd,
And scatter livelier roses round.

The Sun who ne'er remits his fires
On heedless eyes may pour the day:
The Moon, that oft from heaven retires,
Endears her renovated ray.
What though she leaves the sky unblest
To mourn awhile in murky vest?
When she relumes her lovely light,
We bless the wanderer of the night.

LINES ON AN AUTUMNAL EVENING.

O thou, wild Fancy, check thy wing! No more
Those thin white flakes, those purple clouds explore!
Nor there with happy spirits sped thy flight
Bathed in rich amber-glowing floods of light;
Nor in yon gleam, where slow descends the day,
With western peasants hail the morning ray!
Ah! rather bid the perish'd pleasures move,
A shadowy train, across the soul of Love!
O'er Disappointment's wintry desert fling
Each flower that wreathed the dewy locks of Spring,
When blushing, like a bride, from Hope's trim bower
She leapt, awaken'd by the pattering shower.
Now sheds the sinking Sun a deeper gleam,
Aid, lovely Sorceress! aid thy poet's dream!
With faery wand O bid the Maid arise,
Chaste Joyance dancing in her bright-blue eyes;
As erst when from the Muses' calm abode
I came, with Learning's meed not unbestow'd;
When as she twined a laurel round my brow,
And met my kiss, and half return'd my vow,
O'er all my frame shot rapid my thrill'd heart,
And every nerve confess'd th' electric dart.

O dear deceit! I see the Maiden rise,
Chaste Joyance dancing in her bright-blue eyes!
When first the lark, high soaring, swells his throat,
Mocks the tired eye, and scatters the wild note,
I trace her footsteps on the accustom'd lawn,
I mark her glancing mid the gleam of dawn.
When the bent flower beneath the night-dew weeps
And on the lake the silver lustre sleeps,

Amid the paly radiance soft and sad,
She meets my lonely path in moon-beams clad.
With her along the streamlet's brink I rove;
With her I list the warblings of the grove;
And seems in each low wind her voice to float,
Lone-whispering Pity in each soothing note!

Spirits of Love! ye heard her name! obey
The powerful spell, and to my haunt repair.
Whether on clustering pinions ye are there,
Where rich snows blossom on the myrtle trees,
Or with fond languishment around my fair
Sigh in the loose luxuriance of her hair;
O heed the spell, and hither wing your way,
Like far-off music, voyaging the breeze!

Spirits! to you the infant Maid was given,
Form'd by the wonderous alchemy of heaven!
No fairer maid does Love's wide empire know,
No fairer maid e'er heaved the bosom's snow.
A thousand Loves around her forehead fly;
A thousand Loves sit melting in her eye;
Love lights her smile—in Joy's red nectar dips
His myrtle flower, and plants it on her lips.
She speaks! and hark that passion-warbled song—
Still, Fancy! still that voice, those notes prolong,
As sweet as when that voice with rapturous falls
Shall wake the soften'd echoes of Heaven's halls!

O (have I sigh'd) were mine the wizard's rod,
Or mine the power of Proteus, changeful god!
A flower-entangled arbour I would seem
To shield my Love from noontide's sultry beam:
Or bloom a Myrtle, from whose odorous boughs
My love might weave gay garlands for her brows.
When twilight stole across the fading vale,
To fan my love I 'd be the Evening Gale;
Mourn in the soft folds of her swelling vest,
And flutter my faint pinions on her breast!
On Seraph wing I 'd float a Dream by night,
To soothe my Love with shadows of delight:—
Or soar aloft to be the Spangled Skies,
And gaze upon her with a thousand eyes!

As when the Savage, who his drowsy frame
Had bask'd beneath the Sun's unclouded flame,
Awakes amid the troubles of the air,
The skiey deluge, and white lightning's glare—
Aghast he scours before the tempest's sweep,
And sad recalls the sunny hour of sleep:—
So tossed by storms along Life's wildering way,
Mine eye reverted views that cloudless day,
When by my native brook I wont to rove,
While Hope with kisses nursed the Infant Love.

Dear native brook! like Peace, so placidly
Smoothing through fertile fields thy current meek!
Dear native brook! where first young Poesy
Stared wildly-eager in her noontide dream!
Where blamelcss pleasures dimple Quiet's cheek,
As water-lilics ripple thy slow stream!
Dear native haunts! where Virtue still is gay,
Where Friendship's fix'd star sheds a mellow'd ray,
Where Love a crown of thornless Roses wears,
Where soften'd Sorrow smiles within her tears;
And Memory, with a Vestal's chaste employ,
Unceasing feeds the lambent flame of joy!
No more your sky-larks melting from the sight
Shall thrill the attuned heart-string with delight—
No more shall deck your pensive Pleasures sweet
With wreaths of sober hue my evening seat.
Yet dear to Fancy's eye your varied scene
Of wood, hill, dale, and sparkling brook between!
Yet sweet to Fancy's ear the warbled song,
That soars on Morning's wing your vales among.

Scenes of my Hope! the aching eye ye leave,
Like yon bright hues that paint the clouds of eve!
Tearful and saddening with the sadden'd blaze
Mine eye the gleam pursues with wistful gaze,
Sees shades on shades with deeper tint impend,
Till chill and damp the moonless night descend.

THE ROSE.

As late each flower that sweetest blows
I pluck'd, the Garden's pride!
Within the petals of a Rose
A sleeping Love I spied.

Around his brows a beamy wreath
Of many a lucent hue;
All purple glow'd his cheek, beneath,
Inebriate with dew.

I softly scized the unguarded Power,
Nor scared his balmy rest;
And placed him, caged within the flower,
On spotless Sara's breast.

But when unweeting of the guile
Awoke the prisoner sweet,
He struggled to escape awhile,
And stamp'd his faery feet.

Ah! soon the soul-entrancing sight
Subdued the impatient boy!
He gazed! he thrill'd with deep delight!
Then clapp'd his wings for joy.

«And O!» he cried—«Of magic kind
What charm this Throne endear!
Some other Love let Venus find—
I 'll fix *my* empire here.»

THE KISS.

One kiss, dear Maid! I said and sigh'd—
Your scorn the little boon denied.
Ah why refuse the blameless bliss?
Can danger lurk within a kiss?

Yon viewless Wanderer of the vale,
The Spirit of the Western Gale,
At Morning's break, at Evening's close
Inhales the sweetness of the Rose,
And hovers o'er the uninjured bloom
Sighing back the soft perfume.
Vigour to the Zephyr's wing
Her nectar-breathing kisses fling;

And He the glitter of the Dew
Scatters on the Rose's hue.
Bashful, lo! she bends her head,
And darts a blush of deeper red!

Too well those lovely lips disclose
The triumphs of the opening Rose;
O fair! O graceful! bid them prove
As passive to the breath of Love.
In tender accents, faint and low,
Well-pleased I hear the whispered «No!»
The whisper'd «No»—how little meant!
Sweet falsehood that endears consent!
For on those lovely lips the while
Dawns the soft relenting smile,
And tempts with feigned dissuasion coy
The gentle violence of Joy.

TO A YOUNG ASS.

ITS MOTHER BEING TETHERED NEAR IT.

Poor little foal of an oppressed race!
I love the languid patience of thy face:
And oft with gentle hand I give thee bread,
And clap thy ragged coat, and pat thy head.
But what thy dulled spirits hath dismay'd,
That never thou dost sport along the glade?
And (most unlike the nature of things young)
That earthward still thy moveless head is hung?
Do thy prophetic fears anticipate,
Meek Child of Misery! thy future fate?
The starving meal, and all the thousand aches
«Which patient merit of the unworthy takes?»
Or is thy sad heart thrill'd with filial pain
To see thy wretched mother's shorten'd chain?
And truly, very piteous is *her* lot—
Chain'd to a log within a narrow spot
Where the close-eaten grass is scarcely seen,
While sweet around her waves the tempting green!

Poor Ass! thy master should have learnt to show
Pity—best taught by fellowship of woe!
For much I fear me that *he* lives like thee,
Half famish'd in a land of luxury!
How *askingly* its footsteps hither bend?
It seems to say, «And have I then *one* friend?»
Innocent Foal! thou poor despised forlorn!
I hail thee brother—spite of the fool's scorn!
And fain would take thee with me, in the dell
Of peace and mild equality to dwell,
Where Toil shall call the charmer Health his Bride,
And Laughter tickle Plenty's ribless side!
How thou wouldst toss thy heels in gamesome play,
And frisk about, as lamb or kitten gay!
Yea! and more musically sweet to me
Thy dissonant harsh bray of joy would be,
Than warbled melodies that soothe to rest
The aching of pale fashion's vacant breast!

DOMESTIC PEACE.

Tell me, on what holy ground
May Domestic Peace be found?
Halcyon Daughter of the skies,
Far on fearful wings she flies,
From the pomp of scepter'd state,
From the rebel's noisy hate.
In a cottaged vale She dwells
Listening to the Sabbath bells!
Still around her steps are seen
Spotless Honour's meeker mien,
Love, the sire of pleasing fears,
Sorrow smiling through her tears,
And, conscious of the past employ,
Memory, bosom-spring of joy.

THE SIGH.

When Youth his faery reign began
Ere sorrow had proclaim'd me man;
While Peace the present hour beguiled,
And all the lovely prospect smiled;
Then Mary! 'mid my lightsome glee
I heaved the painless Sigh for thee.

And when, along the waves of woe,
My harass'd heart was doom'd to know
The frantic burst of outrage keen,
And the slow pang that gnaws unseen;
Then shipwreck'd on life's stormy sea
I heaved an anguish'd Sigh for thee!

But soon reflection's power imprest
A stiller sadness on my breast;
And sickly hope with waning eye
Was well content to droop and die:
I yielded to the stern decree,
Yet heaved a languid Sigh for thee!

And though in distant climes to roam,
A wanderer from my native home,
I fain would soothe the sense of Care
And lull to sleep the Joys that were!
Thy Image may not banish'd be—
Still, Mary! still I sigh for thee.
June, 1794.

EPITAPH ON AN INFANT.

Ere Sin could blight or Sorrow fade,
Death came with friendly care;
The opening bud to Heaven convey'd
And bade it blossom there.

LINES WRITTEN AT THE KING'S ARMS, ROSS.

FORMERLY THE HOUSE OF THE «MAN OF ROSS.»

Richer than miser o'er his countless hoards,
Nobler than kings, or king-polluted lords,
Here dwelt the Man of Ross! O Traveller, hear!
Departed merit claims a reverent tear.
Friend to the friendless, to the sick man health,
With generous joy he view'd his modest wealth;
He hears the widow's heaven-breathed prayer of praise,
He mark'd the shelter'd orphan's tearful gaze,
Or where the sorrow-shrivell'd captive lay,
Pours the bright blaze of Freedom's noon-tide ray.
Beneath this roof if thy cheer'd moments pass,
Fill to the good man's name one grateful glass:

To higher zest shall Memory wake thy soul,
And Virtue mingle in the ennobled bowl.
But if, like me, through life's distressful scene
Lonely and sad thy pilgrimage hath been;
And if thy breast with heart-sick anguish fraught,
Thou journeyest onward tempest-toss'd in thought;
Here cheat thy cares! in generous visions melt,
And dream of goodness, thou hast never felt!

LINES TO A BEAUTIFUL SPRING IN A VILLAGE.

Once more, sweet Stream! with slow foot wandering near,
I bless thy milky waters cold and clear.
Escaped the flashing of the noontide hours
With one fresh garland of Pierian flowers
(Ere from thy zephyr-haunted brink I turn)
My languid hand shall wreath thy mossy urn.
For not through pathless grove with murmur rude
Thou soothest the sad wood-nymph, Solitude;
Nor thine unseen in cavern depths to well,
The Hermit-fountain of some dripping cell!
Pride of the Vale! thy useful streams supply
The scatter'd cots and peaceful hamlet nigh.
The elfin tribe around thy friendly banks
With infant uproar and soul-soothing pranks,
Released from school, their little hearts at rest,
Launch paper navies on thy waveless breast.
The rustic here at eve with pensive look
Whistling lorn ditties leans upon his crook,
Or, starting, pauses with hope-mingled dread
To list the much-loved maid's accustom'd tread:
She, vainly mindful of her dame's command,
Loiters, the long-fill'd pitcher in her hand.
Unboastful Stream! thy fount with pebbled falls
The faded form of past delight recalls,
What time the morning sun of Hope arose,
And all was joy; save when another's woes
A transient gloom upon my soul imprest,
Like passing clouds impictured on thy breast.
Life's current then ran sparkling to the noon,
Or silvery stole beneath the pensive Moon:
Ah! now it works rude brakes and thorns among,
Or o'er the rough rock bursts and foams along!

LINES ON A FRIEND,

WHO DIED OF A FRENZY FEVER INDUCED BY CALUMNIOUS REPORTS.

Edmund! thy grave with aching eye I scan,
And inly groan for Heaven's poor outcast—Man!
'T is tempest all or gloom: in early youth,
If gifted with the Ithuriel lance of Truth,
We force to start amid her feign'd caress
Vice, siren-hag! in native ugliness;
A brother's fate will haply rouse the tear,
And on we go in heaviness and fear!
But if our fond hearts call to Pleasure's bower
Some pigmy Folly in a careless hour,
The faithless guest shall stamp the enchanted ground
And mingled forms of Misery rise around:
Heart-fretting Fear, with pallid look aghast,
That courts the future woe to hide the past;
Remorse, the poison'd arrow in his side,
And loud lewd Mirth, to Anguish close allied:
Till Frenzy, fierce-eyed child of moping pain,
Darts her hot lightning flash athwart the brain.
Rest, injured shade! Shall Slander squatting near
Spit her cold venom in a dead Man's ear?
'T was thine to feel the sympathetic glow
In Merit's joy, and Poverty's meek woe;
Thine all that cheer the moment as it flies,
The *zoneless* Cares, and smiling Courtesies.
Nursed in thy heart the firmer Virtues grew,
And in thy heart they wither'd! Such chill dew
Wan Indolence on each young blossom shed;
And Vanity her filmy net-work spread,
With eye that roll'd around in asking gaze,
And tongue that traffick'd in the trade of praise.
Thy follies such! the hard world mark'd them well!
Were they more wise, the proud who never fell?
Rest, injured shade! the poor man's grateful prayer
On heaven-ward wing thy wounded soul shall bear.
As oft at twilight gloom thy grave I pass,
And sit me down upon its recent grass,
With introverted eye I contemplate
Similitude of soul, perhaps of—Fate!
To me hath Heaven with bounteous hand assign'd
Energic Reason and a shaping mind,
The daring ken of Truth, the Patriot's part,
And Pity's sigh, that breathes the gentle heart.
Sloth-jaundiced all! and from my grasp less hand
Drop Friendship's precious pearls, like hour-glass sand.
I weep, yet stoop not! the faint anguish flows,
A dreamy pang in Morning's feverish doze.

Is this piled earth our being's passless mound?
Tell me, cold grave! is Death with poppies crown'd?
Tired sentinel! mid fitful starts I nod,
And fain would sleep, though pillow'd on a clod!

TO A YOUNG LADY, WITH A POEM ON THE FRENCH REVOLUTION.

Much on my early youth I love to dwell,
Ere yet I bade that friendly dome farewell,
Where first, beneath the echoing cloisters pale,
I heard of guilt and wonder'd at the tale!
Yet though the hours flew by on careless wing,
Full heavily of Sorrow would I sing.
Aye as the star of evening flung its beam
In broken radiance on the wavy stream,
My soul amid the pensive twilight gloom
Mourn'd with the breeze, O Lee Boo![1] o'er thy tomb.
Where'er I wander'd, Pity still was near,
Breathed from the heart and glisten'd in the tear:
No knell that toll'd, but fill'd my anxious eye,
And suffering Nature wept that *one* should die![2]

Thus to sad sympathies I soothed my breast,
Calm, as the rainbow in the weeping West:
When slumbering Freedom roused with high disdain,
With giant fury burst her triple chain!

[1] Lee Boo, the son of Abba Thule, Prince of the Pelew Islands, came over to England with Captain Wilson, died of the small-pox, and is buried in Greenwich church-yard.—See Keate's *Account*.

[2] Southey's Retrospect.

Fierce on her front the blasting Dog-star glow'd;
Her banners, like a midnight meteor, flow'd;
Amid the yelling of the storm-rent skies!
She came, and scatter'd battles from her eyes!
Then Exultation waked the patriot fire
And swept with wilder hand the Alcæan lyre:
Red from the tyrant's wound I shook the lance,
And strode in joy the reeking plains of France!

Fallen is the oppressor, friendless, ghastly, low,
And my heart aches, though Mercy struck the blow.
With wearied thought once more I seek the shade,
Where peaceful Virtue weaves the myrtle braid.
And O! if eyes whose holy glances roll,
Swift messengers, and eloquent of soul;
If smiles more winning, and a gentler mien
Than the love-wilder'd Maniac's brain hath seen
Shaping celestial forms in vacant air,
If these demand the empassion'd poet's care—
If Mirth and softened Sense and Wit refined,
The blameless features of a lovely mind;
Then haply shall my trembling hand assign
No fading wreath to beauty's saintly shrine.
Nor, Sara! thou these early flowers refuse—
Ne'er lurk'd the snake beneath their simple hues;
No purple bloom the child of nature brings
From Flattery's night-shade: as he feels he sings.

September, 1792.

SONNET.

> Content, as random Fancies might inspire,
> If his weak harp at times, or lonely lyre,
> He struck with desultory hand, and drew
> Some softened tones to Nature not untrue.
>
> BOWLES.

My heart has thanked thee, Bowles! for those soft strains
Whose sadness soothes me, like the murmuring
Of wild-bees in the sunny showers of spring!
For hence not callous to the mourner's pains
Through Youth's gay prime and thornless paths I went:
And when the mightier Throes of mind began,
And drove me forth, a thought-bewilder'd man!
Their mild and manliest melancholy lent
A mingled charm, such as the pang consign'd
To slumber, though the big tear it renewed;
Bidding a strange mysterious Pleasure brood
Over the wavy and tumultuous mind,
As the great Spirit erst with plastic sweep
Moved on the darkness of the unformed deep.

SONNET.

As late I lay in slumber's shadowy vale,
With wetted cheek and in a mourner's guise,
I saw the sainted form of Freedom rise:
She spake! not sadder moans the autumnal gale—
"Great Son of Genius! sweet to me thy name,
Ere in an evil hour with altered voice
Thou badst Oppression's hireling crew rejoice
Blasting with wizard spell my laurell'd fame.
Yet never, Burke! thou drank'st Corruption's bowl!
The stormy Pity and the cherished lure
Of Pomp, and proud Precipitance of soul
Wilder'd with meteor fires. Ah spirit pure!
That error's mist had left thy purged eye:
So might I clasp thee with a mother's joy!"

SONNET.

Though roused by that dark Vizir, Riot rude
Have driven our Priest o'er the ocean swell;
Though Superstition and her wolfish brood
Bay his mild radiance, impotent and fell;
Calm in his halls of brightness he shall dwell!
For lo! Religion at his strong behest
Starts with mild anger from the Papal spell,
And flings to earth her tinsel-glittering vest,
Her mitred state and cumbrous pomp unholy;
And Justice wakes to bid the Oppressor wail
Insulting aye the wrongs of patient Folly:
And from her dark retreat by Wisdom won,
Meek Nature slowly lifts her matron veil
To smile with fondness on her gazing son!

SONNET.

When British Freedom for a happier land
Spread her broad wings, that flutter'd with affright,
Erskine! thy voice she heard, and paused her flight
Sublime of hope! For dreadless thou didst stand
(Thy censer glowing with the hallow'd flame)
A hireless Priest before the insulted shrine,
And at her altar pour the stream divine
Of unmatch'd eloquence. Therefore thy name
Her sons shall venerate, and cheer thy breast
With blessings heaven-ward breathed. And when the doom
Of Nature bids thee die, beyond the tomb
Thy light shall shine: as sunk, beneath the West,
Though the great Summer Sun eludes our gaze,
Still burns wide Heaven with his distended blaze.

SONNET.

It was some Spirit, Sheridan! that breathed
O'er thy young mind such wildly various power!
My soul hath mark'd thee in her shaping hour,
Thy temples with Hymmettian flow'rets wreathed:
And sweet thy voice, as when o'er Laura's bier
Sad music trembled through Vaucluse's glade;
Sweet, as at dawn the love-lorn serenade
That wafts soft dreams to Slumber's listening ear.
Now patriot rage and indignation high
Swell the full tones! And now thine eye-beams dance
Meanings of Scorn and Wit's quaint revelry!
Writhes inly from the bosom-probing glance
The Apostate by the brainless rout adored,
As erst that elder Fiend beneath great Michael's sword.

SONNET.

O what a loud and fearful shriek was there,
As though a thousand souls one death-groan pour'd!
Ah me! they view'd beneath a hireling's sword
Fallen Kosciusko! Through the burthen'd air

As pauses the tired Cossack's barbarous yell
Of triumph) on the chill and midnight gale
Rises with frantic burst or sadder swell
The dirge of murdered Hope! while Freedom pale
Bends in such anguish o'er her destined bier,
As if from eldest time some Spirit meek
Had gathered in a mystic urn each tear
That ever on a Patriot's furrow'd cheek
Fit channel found; and she had drain'd the bowl
In the mere wilfulness, and sick despair of soul!

SONNET.

As when far off the warbled strains are heard
That soar on Morning's wing the vales among,
Within his cage the imprison'd matin bird
Swells the full chorus with a generous song:
He bathes no pinion in the dewy light,
No Father's joy, no Lover's bliss he shares,
Yet still the rising radiance cheers his sight;
His Fellows' freedom soothes the Captive's cares!
Thou, FAYETTE! who didst wake with startling voice
Life's better sun from that long wintry night,
Thus in thy Country's triumphs shalt rejoice
And mock with raptures high the dungeon's might:
For lo! the morning struggles into day,
And Slavery's spectres shriek and vanish from the ray!

SONNET.

THOU gentle Look, that didst my soul beguile,
Why hast thou left me? Still in some fond dream
Revisit my sad heart, auspicious Smile!
As falls on closing flowers the lunar beam:
What time, in sickly mood, at parting day
I lay me down and think of happier years;
Of joys, that glimmered in Hope's twilight ray,
Then left me darkling in a vale of tears.
O pleasant days of Hope—for ever gone!
Could I recall you!—But that thought is vain.
Availeth not Persuasion's sweetest tone
To lure the fleet-wing'd travellers back again:
Yet fair, though faint, their images shall gleam
Like the bright rainbow on a willowy stream.

SONNET.

PALE Roamer through the Night! thou poor Forlorn!
Remorse that man on his death-bed possess,
Who in the credulous hour of tenderness
Betray'd, then cast thee forth to Want and Scorn!
The world is pitiless: the Chaste one's pride,
Mimic of Virtue, scowls on thy distress:
Thy Loves and they, that envied thee, deride:
And Vice alone will shelter wretchedness!
O! I am sad to think, that there should be
Cold-bosom'd lewd ones, who endure to place
Foul offerings on the shrine of Misery,
And force from Famine the caress of Love;
May He shed healing on the sore disgrace,
He, the great Comforter that rules above!

SONNET.

SWEET Mercy! how my very heart has bled
To see thee, poor Old Man! and thy grey hairs
Hoar with the snowy blast: while no one cares
To clothe thy shrivelled limbs and palsied head.
My Father! throw away this tatter'd vest
That mocks thy shivering! take my garment—use
A young man's arm! I'll melt these frozen dews
That hang from thy white beard and numb thy breast.
My Sara too shall tend thee, like a Child:
And thou shalt talk, in our fire-side's recess,
Of purple Pride, that scowls on Wretchedness.
He did not so, the Galilæan mild,
Who met the Lazars turn'd from rich man's doors,
And called them Friends, and healed their noisome Sores!

SONNET.

THOU bleedest, my poor Heart! and thy distress
Reasoning I ponder with a scornful smile,
And probe thy sore wound sternly, though the while
Swoln be mine eye and dim with heaviness.
Why didst thou listen to Hope's whisper bland?
Or, listening, why forget the healing tale,
When Jealousy with feverish fancies pale
Jarr'd thy fine fibres with a maniac's hand?
Faint was that Hope, and rayless!—Yet 't was fair
And soothed with many a dream the hour of rest:
Thou shouldst have loved it most, when most opprest,
And nursed it with an agony of Care,
Even as a Mother her sweet infant heir
That wan and sickly droops upon her breast!

SONNET.

TO THE AUTHOR OF THE «ROBBERS.»

SCHILLER! that hour I would have wish'd to die,
If through the shuddering midnight I had sent
From the dark dungeon of the tower time-rent
That fearful voice, a famished Father's cry—
Lest in some after moment aught more mean
Might stamp me mortal! A triumphant shout
Black Horror scream'd, and all her goblin rout
Diminish'd shrunk from the more withering scene!
Ah Bard tremendous in sublimity!
Could I behold thee in thy loftier mood
Wandering at eve with finely frenzied eye
Beneath some vast old tempest-swinging wood!
Awhile with mute awe gazing I would brood:
Then weep aloud in a wild ecstasy!

LINES

COMPOSED WHILE CLIMBING THE LEFT ASCENT OF BROCKLEY COOMB, SOMERSETSHIRE, MAY 1795.

WITH many a pause and oft-reverted eye
I climb the Coomb's ascent: sweet songsters near
Warble in shade their wild-wood melody:
Far off the unvarying Cuckoo soothes my ear.
Up scour the startling stragglers of the Flock
That on green plots o'er precipices browze:
From the forced fissures of the naked rock
The Yew-tree bursts! Beneath its dark green boughs

('Mid which the May-thorn blends its blossoms white)
Where broad smooth stones jut out in mossy seats,
I rest:—and now have gain'd the topmost site.
Ah! what a luxury of landscape meets
My gaze! Proud Towers, and Cots more dear to me,
Elm-shadow'd Fields, and prospect-bounding Sea!
Deep sighs my lonely heart: I drop the tear:
Enchanting spot! O were my Sara here!

LINES

IN THE MANNER OF SPENSER.

O Peace! that on a lilied bank dost love
To rest thine head beneath an Olive Tree,
I would, that from the pinions of thy Dove
One quill withouten pain ypluck'd might be!
For O! I wish my Sara's frowns to flee,
And fain to her some soothing song would write,
Lest she resent my rude discourtesy,
Who vow'd to meet her ere the morning light,
But broke my plighted word—ah! false and recreant wight!

Last night as I my weary head did pillow
With thoughts of my dissever'd Fair engross'd,
Chill Fancy droop'd wreathing herself with willow,
As though my breast entombed a pining ghost.
« From some blest couch, young Rapture's bridal boast,
Rejected Slumber! hither wing thy way;
But leave me with the matin hour, at most!
As night-closed Floweret to the orient ray,
My sad heart will expand, when I the Maid survey.»

But Love, who heard the silence of my thought,
Contrived a too successful wile, I ween:
And whisper'd to himself, with malice fraught—
« Too long our Slave the Damsel's *smiles* hath seen:
To-morrow shall he ken her alter'd mien!»
He spake, and ambush'd lay, till on my bed
The morning shot her dewy glances keen,
When as I 'gan to lift my drowsy head—
« Now, Bard! I 'll work thee woe!» the laughing Elfin said.

Sleep, softly-breathing God! his downy wing
Was fluttering now, as quickly to depart;
When twang'd an arrow from Love's mystic string,
With pathless wound it pierced him to the heart.
Was there some magic in the Elfin's dart?
Or did he strike my couch with wizard lance?
For straight so fair a Form did upwards start
(No fairer deck'd the Bowers of old Romance)
That Sleep enamour'd grew, nor moved from his sweet trance!

My Sara came, with gentlest look divine;
Bright shone her eye, yet tender was its beam:
I felt the pressure of her lip to mine!
Whispering we went, and Love was all our theme—
Love pure and spotless, as at first, I deem,
He sprang from Heaven! Such joys with Sleep did 'bide,
That I the living Image of my Dream
Fondly forgot. Too late I woke, and sigh'd—
« O! how shall I behold my Love at even-tide!»

IMITATED FROM OSSIAN.

The stream with languid murmur creeps,
In Lumin's *flowery* vale:
Beneath the dew the Lily weeps,
Slow-waving to the gale.

« Cease, restless gale!» it seems to say,
« Nor wake me with thy sighing!
The honours of my vernal day
On rapid wing are flying.

« To morrow shall the Traveller come
Who late beheld me blooming:
His searching eye shall vainly roam
The *dreary* vale of Lumin.»

With eager gaze and wetted cheek
My wonted haunts along,
Thus, faithful Maiden! *thou* shalt seek
The Youth of simplest song.

But I along the breeze shall roll
The voice of feeble power;
And dwell, the Moon-beam of thy soul,
In Slumber's nightly hour.

THE COMPLAINT OF NINATHOMA.

How long will ye round me be swelling,
O ye blue-tumbling waves of the Sea?
Not always in Caves was my dwelling,
Nor beneath the cold blast of the Tree.
Through the high-sounding halls of Cathlóma
In the steps of my beauty I strayed;
The Warriors beheld Ninathóma,
And they blessed the white-bosom'd Maid!

A Ghost! by my cavern it darted!
In moon-beams the Spirit was drest—
For lovely appear the departed
When they visit the dreams of my rest!
But, disturb'd by the Tempest's commotion,
Fleet the shadowy forms of Delight—
Ah cease, thou shrill blast of the Ocean!
To howl through my Cavern by Night.

IMITATED FROM THE WELSH.

If, while my passion I impart,
You deem my words untrue,
O place your hand upon my heart—
Feel how it throbs for *you!*

Ah no! reject the thoughtless claim
In pity to your Lover!
That thrilling touch would aid the flame
It wishes to discover.

TO AN INFANT.

Ah cease thy tears and Sobs, my little Life!
I did but snatch away the unclasp'd Knife:
Some safer Toy will soon arrest thine eye
And to quick Laughter change this peevish cry!

Poor Stumbler on the rocky coast of Woe,
Tutor'd by Pain each source of Pain to know!
Alike the foodful fruit and scorching fire
Awake thy eager grasp and young desire;
Alike the Good, the Ill offend thy sight,
And rouse the stormy sense of shrill affright!
Untaught, yet wise! 'mid all thy brief alarms
Thou closely clingest to thy Mother's arms,
Nestling thy little face in that fond breast
Whose anxious heavings lull thee to thy rest!
Man's breathing Miniature! thou makest me sigh—
A Babe art thou—and such a thing am I!
To anger rapid and as soon appeased,
For trifles mourning and by trifles pleased,
Break Friendship's Mirror with a tetchy blow,
Yet snatch what coals of fire on Pleasure's altar glow!

O thou that rearest with celestial aim
The future Seraph in my mortal frame,
Thrice holy Faith! whatever thorns I meet
As on I totter with unpractised feet,
Still let me stretch my arms and cling to thee,
Meek Nurse of Souls through their long Infancy!

LINES

WRITTEN AT SHURTON BARS, NEAR BRIDGEWATER, SEPTEMBER, 1795, IN ANSWER TO A LETTER FROM BRISTOL.

Good verse *most* good, and bad verse then seems better
Received from absent friend by way of Letter.
For what so sweet can laboured lays impart
As one rude rhyme warm from a friendly heart?
ANON.

Nor travels my meandering eye
The starry wilderness on high;
Nor now with curious sight
I mark the glow-worm, as I pass,
Move with « green radiance» through the grass,
An emerald of light.

O ever present to my view!
My wafted spirit is with you,
And soothes your boding fears:
I see you all oppress'd with gloom
Sit lonely in that cheerless room—
Ah me! You are in tears!

Beloved Woman! did you fly
Chill'd Friendship's dark disliking eye,
Or Mirth's untimely din?
With cruel weight these trifles press
A temper sore with tenderness,
When aches the void within.

But why with sable wand unblessed
Should Fancy rouse within my breast
Dim-visaged shapes of Dread?
Untenanting its beauteous clay
My Sara's soul has wing'd its way,
And hovers round my head!

I felt it prompt the tender Dream,
When slowly sunk the day's last gleam;
You roused each gentler sense
As, sighing o'er the Blossom's bloom,
Meek Evening wakes its soft perfume
With viewless influence.

And hark, my Love! The sea-breeze moans
Through yon reft house! O'er rolling stones
In bold ambitious sweep
The onward-surging tides supply
The silence of the cloudless sky
With mimic thunders deep.

Dark reddening from the channell'd Isle[1]
(Where stands one solitary pile
Unslated by the blast)
The Watchfire, like a sullen star
Twinkles to many a dozing Tar
Rude cradled on the mast.

Even there—beneath that light-house tower—
In the tumultuous evil hour
Ere Peace with Sara came,
Time was, I should have thought it sweet
To count the echoings of my feet,
And watch the storm-vex'd flame.

And there in black soul-jaundiced fit
A sad gloom-pamper'd Man to sit,
And listen to the roar:
When Mountain Surges bellowing deep
With an uncouth monster leap
Plunged foaming on the shore.

Then by the Lightning's blaze to mark
Some toiling tempest-shattered bark;
Her vain distress-guns hear;
And when a second sheet of light
Flash'd o'er the blackness of the night—
To see *no* Vessel there!

But Fancy now more gaily sings;
Or if awhile she droop her wings,
As sky-larks 'mid the corn,
On summer fields she grounds her breast:
The oblivious Poppy o'er her nest
Nods, till returning morn.

O mark those smiling tears, that swell
The open'd Rose! From heaven they fell,
And with the sun-beam blend.
Bless'd visitations from above,
Such are the tender woes of Love
Fostering the heart, they bend!

When stormy Midnight howling round
Beats on our roof with clattering sound,
To me your arms you 'll stretch:
Great God! you 'll say—To us so kind,
O shelter from this loud bleak wind
The houseless, friendless wretch!

The tears that tremble down your cheek,
Shall bathe my kisses chaste and meek

[1] The Holmes, in the Bristol Channel.

In Pity's dew divine;
And from your heart the sighs that steal
Shall make your rising bosom feel
The answering swell of mine!

How oft, my Love! with shapings sweet
I paint the moment we shall meet!
With eager speed I dart—
I seize you in the vacant air,
And fancy, with a Husband's care
I press you to my heart!

'T is said, on Summer's evening hour
Flashes the golden-colour'd flower
A fair electric flame:
And so shall flash my love-charged eye
When all the heart's big ecstasy
Shoots rapid through the frame!

LINES

TO A FRIEND IN ANSWER TO A MELANCHOLY LETTER.

Away, those cloudy looks, that labouring sigh,
The peevish offspring of a sickly hour!
Nor meanly thus complain of Fortune's power,
When the blind Gamester throws a luckless die.

Yon setting Sun flashes a mournful gleam
Behind those broken clouds, his stormy train:
To-morrow shall the many-coloured main
In brightness roll beneath his orient beam!

Wild, as the autumnal gust, the hand of Time
Flies o'er his mystic lyre: in shadowy dance
The alternate groups of Joy and Grief advance
Responsive to his varying strains sublime!

Bears on its wing each hour a load of Fate;
The swain, who, lull'd by Seine's mild murmurs, led
His weary oxen to their nightly shed,
To-day may rule a tempest-troubled State.

Nor shall not Fortune with a vengeful smile
Survey the sanguinary Despot's might,
And haply hurl the Pageant from his height,
Unwept to wander in some savage isle.

There shiv'ring sad beneath the tempest's frown
Round his tired limbs to wrap the purple vest;
And mix'd with nails and beads, an equal jest!
Barter for food, the jewels of his crown.

RELIGIOUS MUSINGS;

A DESULTORY POEM,

WRITTEN ON THE CHRISTMAS EVE OF 1794.

This is the time, when most divine to hear,
The voice of Adoration rouses me,
As with a Cherub's trump: and high upborne,
Yea, mingling with the Choir, I seem to view
The vision of the heavenly multitude,
Who hymn'd the song of Peace o'er Bethlehem's fields!
Yet thou more bright than all the Angel blaze,
That harbinger'd thy birth, Thou, Man of Woes!
Despised Galilæan! For the Great
Invisible (by symbols only seen)
With a peculiar and surpassing light
Shines from the visage of the oppress'd good Man,
When heedless of himself the scourged Saint
Mourns for the Oppressor. Fair the vernal Mead,
Fair the high Grove, the Sea, the Sun, the Stars;
True impress each of their creating Sire!
Yet nor high Grove, nor many-colour'd Mead,
Nor the green Ocean with his thousand Isles,
Nor the starred Azure, nor the sovran Sun,
E'er with such majesty of portraiture
Imaged the supreme beauty uncreate,
As thou, meek Saviour! at the fearful hour
When thy insulted Anguish wing'd the prayer
Harp'd by Archangels, when they sing of Mercy!
Which when the Almighty heard from forth his Throne
Diviner light fill'd Heaven with ecstasy!
Heaven's hymnings paused: and Hell her yawning mouth
Closed a brief moment.

Lovely was the death
Of Him whose life was love! Holy with power
He on the thought-benighted sceptic beam'd
Manifest Godhead, melting into day
What floating mists of dark Idolatry
Broke and misshaped the Omnipresent Sire:
And first by Fear uncharmed the droused Soul.[1]
Till of its nobler nature it 'gan feel
Dim recollections: and thence soared to Hope,
Strong to believe whate'er of mystic good
The Eternal dooms for his immortal Sons.
From Hope and firmer Faith to perfect Love
Attracted and absorb'd: and centred there
God only to behold, and know, and feel,
Till by exclusive Consciousness of God
All self-annihilated it shall make
God its Identity: God all in all!
We and our Father one!

And bless'd are they,
Who in this fleshly World, the elect of Heaven,
Their strong eye darting through the deeds of Men,
Adore with stedfast unpresuming gaze
Him Nature's Essence, Mind, and Energy!
And gazing, trembling, patiently ascend
Treading beneath their feet all visible things
As steps, that upward to their Father's Throne
Lead gradual—else nor glorified nor loved.
They nor Contempt embosom nor Revenge:
For they dare know of what may seem deform
The Supreme Fair sole Operant: in whose sight
All things are pure, his strong controlling Love
Alike from all educing perfect good.
Theirs too celestial courage, inly armed—
Dwarfing Earth's giant brood, what time they muse
On their great Father, great beyond compare!
And marching onwards view high o'er their heads
His waving Banners of Omnipotence.

Who the Creator love, created might
Dread not: within their tents no terrors walk.

[1] Το Νοητον διηρηκασιν εις πολλων
Θεων ιδιοτητας.
Damas. *de Myst. Ægypt.*

For they are holy things before the Lord,
Aye unprofaned, though Earth should league with Hell;
God's Altar grasping with an eager hand
Fear, the wild-visaged, pale, eye-starting wretch,
Sure-refuged hears his hot pursuing fiends
Yell at vain distance. Soon refresh'd from Heaven,
He calms the throb and tempest of his heart.
His countenance settles; a soft solemn bliss
Swims in his eye—his swimming eye upraised:
And Faith's whole armour glitters on his limbs!
And thus transfigured with a dreadless awe,
A solemn hush of soul, meek he beholds
All things of terrible seeming: yea, unmoved
Views e'en the immitigable ministers
That shower down vengeance on these latter days.
For kindling with intenser Deity
From the celestial Mercy-seat they come,
And at the renovating Wells of Love
Have fill'd their Vials with salutary Wrath,
To sickly Nature more medicinal
Than what soft balm the weeping good man pours
Into the lone despoiled traveller's wounds!

Thus from the Elect, regenerate through faith,
Pass the dark Passions and what thirsty Cares
Drink up the spirit and the dim regards
Self-centre. Lo they vanish! or acquire
New names, new features—by supernal grace
Enrobed with light, and naturalized in Heaven.
As when a shepherd on a vernal morn
Through some thick fog creeps timorous with slow foot,
Darkling he fixes on the immediate road
His downward eye: all else of fairest kind
Hid or deform'd. But lo! the bursting Sun!
Touch'd by the enchantment of that sudden beam
Straight the black vapour melteth, and in globes
Of dewy glitter gems each plant and tree;
On every leaf, on every blade it hangs!
Dance glad the new-born intermingling rays,
And wide around the landscape streams with glory!

There is one Mind, one omnipresent Mind,
Omnific. His most holy name is Love.
Truth of subliming import! with the which
Who feeds and saturates his constant soul,
He from his small particular orbit flies
With bless'd outstarting! From Himself he flies,
Stands in the Sun, and with no partial gaze
Views all creation; and he loves it all,
And blesses it, and calls it very good!
This is indeed to dwell with the Most High!
Cherubs and rapture-trembling Seraphim
Can press no nearer to the Almighty's Throne.
But that we roam unconscious, or with hearts
Unfeeling of our universal Sire,
And that in his vast family no Cain
Injures uninjured (in her best-aim'd blow
Victorious Murder a blind Suicide),
Haply for this some younger Angel now
Looks down on Human Nature: and, behold!
A sea of blood bestrew'd with wrecks, where mad
Embattling Interests on each other rush
With unhelm'd rage!

'T is the sublime of man,
Our noontide Majesty, to know ourselves
Parts and proportions of one wondrous whole!
This fraternizes man, this constitutes
Our charities and bearings. But 't is God
Diffused through all, that doth make all one whole;
This the worst superstition, him except
Aught to desire, Supreme Reality!
The plenitude and permanence of bliss!
O Fiends of Superstition! not that oft
The erring Priest hath stain'd with brother's blood
Your grisly idols, not for this may wrath
Thunder against you from the Holy One!
But o'er some plain that steameth to the sun,
Peopled with Death; or where more hideous Trade
Loud-laughing packs his bales of human anguish:
I will raise up a mourning, O ye Fiends!
And curse your spells, that film the eye of Faith,
Hiding the present God; whose presence lost,
The moral world's cohesion, we become
An anarchy of Spirits! Toy-bewitch'd,
Made blind by lusts, disherited of soul,
No common centre Man, no common sire
Knoweth! A sordid solitary thing,
'Mid countless brethren with a lonely heart
Through courts and cities the smooth Savage roams,
Feeling himself, his own low Self the whole;
When he by sacred sympathy might make
The whole one self! Self, that no alien knows!
Self, far diffused as Fancy's wing can travel!
Self, spreading still! Oblivious of its own,
Yet all of all possessing! This is Faith!
This the Messiah's destined victory!

But first offences needs must come! Even now[1]
(Black Hell laughs horrible—to hear the scoff!)
Thee to defend, meek Galilean! Thee
And thy mild laws of love unutterable,
Mistrust and Enmity have burst the bands
Of social Peace; and listening Treachery lurks
With *pious* fraud to snare a brother's life;
And childless widows o'er the groaning land
Wail numberless; and orphans weep for bread;
Thee to defend, dear Saviour of Mankind!
Thee, Lamb of God! Thee, blameless Prince of Peace!
From all sides rush the thirsty brood of War?
Austria, and that foul Woman of the North,
The lustful Murderess of her wedded Lord!
And he, connatural Mind! whom (in their songs
So bards of elder time had haply feign'd)
Some Fury fondled in her hate to man,
Bidding her serpent hair in mazy surge
Lick his young face, and at his mouth inbreathe
Horrible sympathy! And leagued with these
Each petty German princeling, nursed in gore!
Soul-harden'd barterers of human blood!

[1] January 21st, 1794, in the debate on the Address to his Majesty, on the speech from the Throne, the Earl of Guildford moved an Amendment to the following effect;—"That the House hoped his Majesty would seize the earliest opportunity to conclude a peace with France," etc. This motion was opposed by the Duke of Portland, who "considered the war to be merely grounded on one principle—the preservation of the Christian Religion." May 30th, 1794, the Duke of Bedford moved a number of Resolutions, with a view to the Establishment of a Peace with France. He was opposed (among others) by Lord Abingdon in these remarkable words: "The best road to Peace, my Lords, is War! and War carried on in the same manner in which we are taught to worship our Creator, namely, with all our souls, and with all our minds, and with all our hearts, and with all our strength."

Death's prime Slave-merchants! Scorpion-whips of Fate!
Nor least in savagery of holy zeal,
Apt for the yoke, the race degenerate,
Whom Britain erst had blush'd to call her sons!
Thee to defend the Moloch Priest prefers
The prayer of hate, and bellows to the herd
That Deity, Accomplice Deity
In the fierce jealousy of waken'd wrath
Will go forth with our armies and our fleets,
To scatter the red ruin on their foes?
O blasphemy! to mingle fiendish deeds
With blessedness!

Lord of unsleeping Love,[1]
From everlasting Thou! We shall not die.
These, even these, in mercy didst thou form,
Teachers of Good through Evil, by brief wrong
Making Truth lovely, and her future might
Magnetic o'er the fix'd untrembling heart.

In the primeval age a dateless while
The vacant Shepherd wander'd with his flock,
Pitching his tent where'er the green grass waved.
But soon Imagination conjured up
An host of new desires: with busy aim,
Each for himself, Earth's eager children toil'd.
So Property began, twy-streaming fount,
Whence Vice and Virtue flow, honey and gall.
Hence the soft couch, and many-colour'd robe,
The timbrel, and arch'd dome and costly feast,
With all the inventive arts, that nursed the soul
To forms of beauty, and by sensual wants
Unsensualized the mind, which in the means
Learnt to forget the grossness of the end,
Best pleasured with its own activity.
And hence Disease that withers manhood's arm,
The dagger'd Envy, spirit-quenching Want,
Warriors, and Lords, and Priests—all the sore ills
That vex and desolate our mortal life.
Wide-wasting ills! yet each the immediate source
Of mightier good. Their keen necessities
To ceaseless action goading human thought
Have made Earth's reasoning animal her Lord;
And the pale-featured Sage's trembling hand
Strong as an host of arm'd Deities,
Such as the blind Ionian fabled erst.

From Avarice thus, from Luxury and War
Sprang heavenly Science; and from Science Freedom.
O'er waken'd realms Philosophers and Bards
Spread in concentric circles: they whose souls,
Conscious of their high dignities from God,
Brook not Wealth's rivalry! and they who long
Enamour'd with the charms of order hate
The unseemly disproportion: and whoe'er
Turn with mild sorrow from the victor's car
And the low puppetry of thrones, to muse
On that blest triumph, when the patriot Sage
Call'd the red lightnings from the o'er-rushing cloud,
And dash'd the beauteous Terrors on the earth
Smiling majestic. Such a phalanx ne'er
Measured firm paces to the calming sound
Of Spartan flute! These on the fated day,
When, stung to rage by Pity, eloquent men
Have roused with pealing voice unnumber'd tribes
That toil and groan and bleed, hungry and blind.
These hush'd awhile with patient eye serene,
Shall watch the mad careering of the storm;
Then o'er the wild and wavy chaos rush
And tame the outrageous mass, with plastic might
Moulding Confusion to such perfect forms,
As erst were wont, bright visions of the day!
To float before them, when, the Summer noon,
Beneath some arch'd romantic rock reclined
They felt the sea breeze lift their youthful locks;
Or in the month of blossoms, at mild eve,
Wandering with desultory feet inhaled
The wafted perfumes, and the rocks and woods
And many-tinted streams and setting Sun
With all his gorgeous company of clouds
Ecstatic gazed! then homeward as they stray'd
Cast the sad eye to earth, and inly mused
Why there was Misery in a world so fair.
Ah far removed from all that glads the sense,
From all that softens or ennobles Man,
The wretched Many! Bent beneath their loads
They gape at pageant Power, nor recognize
Their cots' transmuted plunder! From the tree
Of Knowledge, ere the vernal sap had risen
Rudely disbranch'd! *Blessed* Society!
Fitliest depictured by some sun-scorch'd waste,
Where oft majestic through the tainted noon
The Simoom sails, before whose purple pomp
Who falls not prostrate dies! And where by night,
Fast by each precious fountain on green herbs
The lion couches; or hyæna dips
Deep in the lucid stream his bloody jaws;
Or serpent plants his vast moon-glittering bulk,
Caught in whose monstrous twine Behemoth[1] yells,
His bones loud-crashing!

O ye numberless,
Whom foul Oppression's ruffian gluttony
Drives from life's plenteous feast! O thou poor wretch,
Who nursed in darkness and made wild by want,
Roamest for prey, yea thy unnatural hand
Dost lift to deeds of blood! O pale-eyed form,
The victim of seduction, doom'd to know
Polluted nights and days of blasphemy;
Who in loathed orgies with lewd wassailers
Must gaily laugh, while thy remember'd home
Gnaws like a viper at thy secret heart!
O aged Women! ye who weekly catch
The morsel toss'd by law-forced Charity,
And die so slowly, that none call it murder!
O loathly Suppliants! ye, that unreceived
Totter heart-broken from the closing gates
Of the full Lazar-house: or, gazing, stand
Sick with despair! O ye to Glory's field
Forced or ensnared, who, as ye gasp in death,
Bleed with new wounds beneath the Vulture's beak!
O thou poor Widow, who in dreams dost view
Thy Husband's mangled corse, and from short doze
Start'st with a shriek; or in thy half-thatch'd cot
Waked by the wintry night-storm, wet and cold,
Cow'rst o'er thy screaming baby! Rest awhile

[1] Art thou not from everlasting, O Lord, mine Holy One? We shall not die. O Lord, thou hast ordained them for Judgment, etc.—Habakkuk.

[1] Behemoth, in Hebrew, signifies wild beasts in general. Some believe it is the elephant, some the hippopotamus; some affirm it is the wild bull. Poetically, it designates any large quadruped.

Children of Wretchedness! More groans must rise,
More blood must stream, or ere your wrongs be full.
Yet is the day of Retribution nigh:
The Lamb of God hath opened the fifth seal:
And upward rush on swiftest wing of fire
The innumerable multitude of wrongs
By man on man inflicted! Rest awhile,
Children of Wretchedness! The hour is nigh;
And lo! the Great, the Rich, the Mighty Men,
The Kings and the Chief Captains of the World,
With all that fix'd on high like stars of Heaven
Shot baleful influence, shall be cast to earth,
Vile and down-trodden, as the untimely fruit
Shook from the fig-tree by a sudden storm.
Even now the storm begins: [1] each gentle name,
Faith and meek Piety, with fearful joy
Tremble far-off—for lo! the Giant Frenzy,
Uprooting empires with his whirlwind arm,
Mocketh high Heaven; burst hideous from the cell
Where the old Hag, unconquerable, huge,
Creation's eyeless drudge, black Ruin, sits
Nursing the impatient earthquake.

O return!
Pure Faith! meek Piety! The abhorr'd Form
Whose scarlet robe was stiff with earthly pomp,
Who drank iniquity in cups of gold,
Whose names were many and all blasphemous,
Hath met the horrible judgment! Whence that cry?
The mighty army of foul Spirits shriek'd
Disherited of earth! For she hath fallen
On whose black front was written Mystery;
She that reel'd heavily, whose wine was blood;
She that work'd whoredom with the Demon Power,
And from the dark embrace all evil things
Brought forth and nurtured: mitred Atheism:
And patient Folly who on bended knee
Gives back the steel that stabb'd him; and pale Fear
Hunted by ghastlier shapings than surround
Moon-blasted Madness when he yells at midnight!
Return pure Faith! return meek Piety!
The kingdoms of the world are yours: each heart,
Self-govern'd, the vast family of Love
Raised from the common earth by common toil
Enjoy the equal produce. Such delights
As float to earth, permitted visitants!
When in some hour of solemn jubilee
The massy gates of Paradise are thrown
Wide open, and forth come in fragments wild
Sweet echoes of unearthly melodies,
And odours snatch'd from beds of Amaranth,
And they, that from the crystal river of life
Spring up on freshen'd wing, ambrosial gales!
The favour'd good man in his lonely walk
Perceives them, and his silent spirit drinks
Strange bliss which he shall recognize in heaven.
And such delights, such strange beatitude
Seize on my young anticipating heart
When that blest future rushes on my view!
For in his own and in his Father's might
The Saviour comes! While as the Thousand Years
Lead up their mystic dance, the Desert shouts!
Old Ocean claps his hands! The mighty Dead
Rise to new life, whoe'er from earliest time
With conscious zeal had urged Love's wondrous plan,
Coadjutors of God. To Milton's trump
The high Groves of the renovated Earth
Unbosom their glad echoes: inly hush'd,
Adoring Newton his serener eye
Raises to heaven: and he of mortal kind
Wisest, he [1] first who mark'd the ideal tribes
Up the fine fibres through the sentient brain.
Lo! Priestley there, Patriot, and Saint, and Sage,
Him, full of years, from his loved native land
Statesmen blood-stain'd and Priests idolatrous
By dark lies maddening the blind multitude
Drove with vain hate. Calm, pitying he retired,
And mused expectant on these promised years.

O Years! the blest pre-eminence of Saints!
Ye sweep athwart my gaze, so heavenly bright,
The wings that veil the adoring Seraph's eyes,
What time he bends before the Jasper Throne, [2]
Reflect no lovelier hues! yet ye depart,
And all beyond is darkness! Heights most strange,
Whence Fancy falls, fluttering her idle wing.
For who of woman born may paint the hour,
When seized in his mid course, the Sun shall wane
Making noon ghastly! Who of woman born
May image in the workings of his thought,
How the black-visaged, red-eyed Fiend outstretch'd [3]
Beneath the unsteady feet of Nature groans,
In feverish slumbers—destined then to wake,
When fiery whirlwinds thunder his dread name
And Angels shout, Destruction! How his arm
The last great Spirit lifting high in air
Shall swear by Him, the ever-living One,
Time is no more!

Believe thou, O my soul,
Life is a vision shadowy of Truth;
And vice, and anguish, and the wormy grave,
Shapes of a dream! The veiling clouds retire,
And lo! the Throne of the redeeming God
Forth flashing unimaginable day,
Wraps in one blaze earth, heaven, and deepest hell.

Contemplant Spirits! ye that hover o'er
With untired gaze the immeasurable fount
Ebullient with creative Deity!
And ye of plastic power, that interfused
Roll through the grosser and material mass
In organizing surge! Holies of God!
(And what if Monads of the infinite mind)
I haply journeying my immortal course
Shall sometime join your mystic choir? Till then
I discipline my young noviciate thought
In ministries of heart-stirring song,
And aye on Meditation's heaven-ward wing
Soaring aloft I breathe the empyreal air
Of Love, omnific, omnipresent Love,
Whose day-spring rises glorious in my soul
As the great Sun, when he his influence
Sheds on the frost-bound waters—The glad stream
Flows to the ray, and warbles as it flows.

[1] Alluding to the French Revolution.

[1] David Hartley.

[2] Rev. Chap. iv, v. 2 and 3.—And immediately I was in the Spirit: and behold, a Throne was set in Heaven, and one sat on the Throne. And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and sardine stone, etc.

[3] The final Destruction impersonated.

THE DESTINY OF NATIONS.

A VISION.

Auspicious Reverence! Hush all meaner song,
Ere we the deep preluding strain have pour'd
To the Great Father, only Rightful King,
Eternal Father! King Omnipotent!
The Will, the Word, the Breath,—the Living God.

Such symphony requires best instrument.
Seize, then, my soul! from Freedom's trophied dome,
The Harp which hangeth high between the Shields
Of Brutus and Leonidas! With that
Strong music, that soliciting spell, force back
Earth's free and stirring spirit that lies entranced.

For what is Freedom, but the unfetter'd use
Of all the powers which God for use had given?
But chiefly this, him First, him Last to View
Through meaner powers and secondary things
Effulgent, as through clouds that veil his blaze.
For all that meets the bodily sense I deem
Symbolical, one mighty alphabet
For infant minds; and we in this low world
Placed with our backs to bright Reality,
That we may learn with young unwounded ken
The substance from its shadow. Infinite Love,
Whose latence is the plenitude of All,
Thou with retracted Beams, and Self-eclipse
Veiling, revealest thine eternal Sun.

But some there are who deem themselves most free
When they within this gross and visible sphere
Chain down the winged thought, scoffing ascent,
Proud in their meanness: and themselves they cheat
With noisy emptiness of learned phrase,
Their subtle fluids, impacts, essences,
Self-working tools, uncaused effects, and all
Those blind Omnisclents, those Almighty Slaves,
Untenanting creation of its God.

But properties are God: the naked mass
(If mass there be, fantastic Guess or Ghost)
Acts only by its inactivity.
Here we pause humbly. Others boldlier think
That as one body seems the aggregate
Of Atoms numberless, each organized;
So, by a strange and dim similitude,
Infinite myriads of self-conscious minds
Are one all-conscious Spirit, which informs
With absolute ubiquity of thought
(His one eternal self-affirming Act!)
All his involved Monads, that yet seem
With various province and apt agency
Each to pursue its own self-centering end.
Some nurse the infant diamond in the mine;
Some roll the genial juices through the oak;
Some drive the mutinous clouds to clash in air,
And rushing on the storm with whirlwind speed,
Yoke the red lightning to their volleying car.
Thus these pursue their never-varying course,
No eddy in their stream. Others, more wild,
With complex interests weaving human fates,
Duteous or proud, alike obedient all,
Evolve the process of eternal good.

And what if some rebellious, o'er dark realms
Arrogate power? yet these train up to God,
And on the rude eye, unconfirm'd for day,
Flash meteor-lights better than total gloom.
As ere from Lieule-Oaive's vapoury head
The Laplander beholds the far-off Sun
Dart his slant beam on unobeying snows,
While yet the stern and solitary Night
Brooks no alternate sway, the Boreal Morn
With mimic lustre substitutes its gleam,
Guiding his course o'er by Niemi lake
Or Balda-Zhiok,[1] or the mossy stone
Of Solfar-kapper,[2] while the snowy blast
Drifts arrowy by, or eddies round his sledge,
Making the poor babe at its mother's back[3]
Scream in its scanty cradle: he the while
Wins gentle solace as with upward eye
He marks the streamy banners of the North,
Thinking himself those happy spirits shall join
Who there in floating robes of rosy light
Dance sportively. For Fancy is the Power
That first unsensualizes the dark mind,
Giving it new delights; and bids it swell
With wild activity; and peopling air,
By obscure fears of Beings invisible,
Emancipates it from the grosser thrall
Of the present impulse, teaching Self-control,
Till Superstition with unconscious hand
Seat Reason on her throne. Wherefore not vain,
Nor yet without permitted power impress'd,
I deem'd those legends terrible, with which
The polar ancient thrills his uncouth throng;
Whether of pitying Spirits that make their moan
O'er slaughter'd infants, or that Giant Bird
Vuokho, of whose rushing wings the noise
Is Tempest, when the unutterable shape[4]
Speeds from the mother of Death, and utters once
That shriek, which never Murderer heard and lived.
Or if the Greenland Wizard in strange trance
Pierces the untravell'd realms of Ocean's bed
(Where live the innocent, as far from cares
As from the storms and overwhelming waves
Dark tumbling on the surface of the deep),
Over the abysm, even to that uttermost cave
By mis-shaped prodigies beleaguer'd, such
As Earth ne'er bred, nor Air, nor the upper Sea.

There dwells the Fury Form, whose unheard name
With eager eye, pale cheek, suspended breath,

[1] *Balda Zhiok; i. e.* mons altitudinis, the highest mountain in Lapland.

[2] *Solfar Kapper;* capitium Solfar, hic locus omnium quotquot veterum Lapponum superstitio sacrificiis religiosoque cultui dedicavit, celebratissimus erat, in parte sinus australis situs semimilliaris spatio a mari distans. Ipse locus, quem curiositatis gratia aliquando me invisisse memini, duabus prealtis lapidibus, sibi invicem oppositis, quorum alter musco circumdatus erat, constabat.—Leemius *De Lapponibus.*

[3] The Lapland Women carry their infants at their back in a piece of excavated wood, which serves them for a cradle. Opposite to the infant's mouth there is a hole for it to breath through.—Mirandum prorsus est et vix credibile nisi cui vidisset contigit. Lappones hyeme iter facientes per vastas montes, perque horrida et invia tesqua, eo presertim tempore quo omnia perpetuis nivibus obtecta sunt et nives ventis agitantur et in gyros aguntur, viam ad destinata loca absque errore invenire posse, lactantem autem infantem si quem habeat, ipsa mater in dorso bajulat, in excavato ligno (Gieed'k ipsi vocant) quod pro cunis utuntur: in hoc infans pannis et pellibus convolutus colligatus jacet.—Leemius *De Lapponibus.*

[4] Jaibme Aibmo.

And lips half-opening with the dread of sound,
Unsleeping Silence guards, worn out with fear,
Lest, haply escaping on some treacherous blast,
The fateful word let slip the Elements,
And frenzy Nature. Yet the wizard her,
Arm'd with Torngarsuck's [1] power, the Spirit of Good,
Forces to unchain the foodful progeny
Of the Ocean's stream.—Wild phantasies! yet wise,
On the victorious goodness of high God
Teaching Reliance, and Medicinal Hope,
Till from Bethabra northward, heavenly Truth,
With gradual steps winning her difficult way,
Transfer their rude Faith perfected and pure.

If there be Beings of higher class than Man,
I deem no nobler province they possess,
Than by disposal of apt circumstance
To rear up Kingdoms: and the deeds they prompt,
Distinguishing from mortal agency,
They chuse their human ministers from such states
As still the Epic song half fears to name,
Repell'd from all the Minstrelsies that strike
The Palace-Roof and soothe the Monarch's pride.

And such, perhaps, the Spirit, who (if words
Witness'd by answering deeds may claim our Faith)
Held commune with that warrior-maid of France
Who scourged the Invader. From her infant days,
With Wisdom, Mother of retired Thoughts,
Her soul had dwelt; and she was quick to mark
The good and evil thing, in human lore
Undisciplined. For lowly was her Birth,
And Heaven had doom'd her early years to Toil,
That pure from Tyranny's least deed, herself
Unfear'd by Fellow-natures, she might wait
On the poor Labouring man with kindly looks,
And minister refreshment to the tired
Way-wanderer, when along the rough-hewn Bench
The sweltry man had stretch'd him, and aloft
Vacantly watch'd the rudely pictured board
Which on the Mulberry-bough with welcome creak
Swung to the pleasant breeze. Here, too, the Maid
Learnt more than Schools could teach: Man's shifting mind,
His Vices and his Sorrows! And full oft
At Tales of cruel Wrong and strange Distress
Had wept and shiver'd. To the tottering Eld
Still as a Daughter would she run: she placed
His cold Limbs at the sunny Door, and loved
To hear him story, in his garrulous sort,
Of his eventful years, all come and gone.

So twenty seasons past. The Virgin's Form,
Active and tall, nor Sloth nor Luxury
Had shrunk or paled. Her front sublime and broad,
Her flexile eye-brows wildly hair'd and low,
And her full eye, now bright, now unillumed,
Spake more than Woman's Thought; and all her face
Was moulded to such Features as declared
That Pity there had oft and strongly work'd,
And sometimes Indignation. Bold her mien,
And like a haughty Huntress of the woods
She moved: yet sure she was a gentle maid!
And in each motion her most innocent soul
Beam'd forth so brightly, that who saw would say
Guilt was a thing impossible in her!
Nor idly would have said—for she had lived
In this bad World as in a place of Tombs,
And touch'd not the pollutions of the Dead.

'T was the cold season, when the Rustic's eye
From the drear desolate whiteness of his fields
Rolls for relief to watch the skiey tints
And clouds slow varying their huge imagery;
When now, as she was wont, the healthful Maid
Had left her pallet ere one beam of day
Slanted the fog-smoke. She went forth alone,
Urged by the indwelling angel-guide, that oft,
With dim inexplicable sympathies
Disquieting the Heart, shapes out Man's course
To the predoom'd adventure. Now the ascent
She climbs of that steep upland, on whose top
The Pilgrim-Man, who long since eve had watch'd
The alien shine of unconcerning Stars,
Shouts to himself, there first the Abbey-lights
Seen in Neufchatel's vale; now slopes adown
The winding sheep-track vale-ward: when, behold
In the first entrance of the level road
An unattended Team! The foremost horse
Lay with stretch'd limbs; the others, yet alive,
But stiff and cold, stood motionless, their manes
Hoar with the frozen night-dews. Dismally
The dark-red down now glimmer'd; but its gleams
Disclosed no face of man. The Maiden paused,
Then hail'd who might be near. No voice replied.
From the thwart wain at length there reach'd her ear
A sound so feeble that it almost seem'd
Distant: and feebly, with slow effort push'd,
A miserable man crept forth: his limbs
The silent frost had eat, scathing like fire.
Faint on the shafts he rested. She, mean time,
Saw crowded close beneath the coverture
A mother and her children—lifeless all,
Yet lovely! not a lineament was marr'd—
Death had put on so slumber-like a form!
It was a piteous sight; and one, a babe,
The crisp milk frozen on its innocent lips,
Lay on the woman's arm, its little hand
Stretch'd on her bosom.

Mutely questioning,
The Maid gazed wildly at the living wretch.
He, his head feebly turning, on the group
Look'd with a vacant stare, and his eye spoke
The drowsy calm that steals on worn-out anguish.
She shudder'd: but, each vainer pang subdued,
Quick disentangling from the foremost horse
The rustic bands, with difficulty and toil
The stiff cramp'd team forced homeward. There arrived,
Anxiously tends him she with healing herbs,
And weeps and prays—but the numb power of Death
Spreads o'er his limbs; and ere the noon-tide hour,
The hovering spirits of his Wife and Babes
Hail him immortal! Yet amid his pangs,

[1] They call the Good Spirit Torngarsuck. The other great but malignant spirit is a nameless Female; she dwells under the sea in a great house, where she can detain in captivity all the animals of the ocean by her magic power. When a dearth befalls the Greenlanders, an Angekok or magician must undertake a journey thither. He passes through the kingdom of souls, over an horrible abyss into the Palace of this phantom, and by his enchantments causes the captive creatures to ascend directly to the surface of the ocean. See CRANTZ' *Hist. of Greenland*, vol. i, 206.

With interruptions long from ghastly throes,
His voice had falter'd out this simple tale.

The Village, where he dwelt an Husbandman,
By sudden inroad had been seized and fired
Late on the yester-evening. With his wife
And little ones he hurried his escape.
They saw the neighbouring Hamlets flame, they heard
Uproar and shrieks! and terror-struck drove on
Through unfrequented roads, a weary way!
But saw nor house nor cottage. All had quench'd
Their evening hearth-fire: for the alarm had spread.
The air clipt keen, the night was fang'd with frost,
And they provisionless! The weeping wife
Ill hush'd her children's moans; and still they moan'd,
Till Fright and Cold and Hunger drank their life.
They closed their eyes in sleep, nor knew 't was Death.
He only, lashing his o'er-wearied team,
Gain'd a sad respite, till beside the base
Of the high hill his foremost horse dropped dead.
Then hopeless, strengthless, sick for lack of food,
He crept beneath the coverture, entranced,
Till waken'd by the maiden.—Such his tale.

Ah! suffering to the height of what was suffer'd,
Stung with too keen a sympathy, the Maid
Brooded with moving lips, mute, startful, dark!
And now her flush'd tumultuous features shot
Such strange vivacity, as fires the eye
Of misery Fancy-crazed! and now once more
Naked, and void, and fix'd, and all within
The unquiet silence of confused thought
And shapeless feelings. For a mighty hand
Was strong upon her, till in the heat of soul
To the high hill-top tracing back her steps,
Aside the beacon, up whose smoulder'd stones
The tender ivy-trails crept thinly, there,
Unconscious of the driving element,
Yea, swallow'd up in the ominous dream, she sate
Ghastly as broad-eyed Slumber! a dim anguish
Breathed from her look! and still, with pant and sob,
Inly she toil'd to flee, and still subdued,
Felt an inevitable Presence near.

Thus as she toiled in troublous ecstasy,
An horror of great darkness wrapt her round,
And a voice uttered forth unearthly tones,
Calming her soul,—« O Thou of the Most High
Chosen, whom all the perfected in Heaven
Behold expectant——

[The following fragments were intended to form part of the Poem when finished.]

« Maid beloved of Heaven!»
(To her the tutelary Power exclaimed)
« Of Chaos the adventurous progeny
Thou seest; foul missionaries of foul sire,
Fierce to regain the losses of that hour
When love rose glittering, and his gorgeous wings
Over the abyss flutter'd with such glad noise,
As what time after long and pestful calms,
With slimy shapes and miscreated life
Poisoning the vast Pacific, the fresh breeze
Wakens the merchant-sail uprising. Night
A heavy unimaginable moan
Sent forth, when she the Protoplast beheld
Stand beauteous on Confusion's charmed wave.
Moaning she fled, and entered the Profound
That leads with downward windings to the Cave
Of darkness palpable, Desert of Death
Sunk deep beneath Gehenna's massy roots.
There many a dateless age the Beldame lurk'd
And trembled; till engender'd by fierce Hate,
Fierce Hate and gloomy Hope, a Dream arose,
Shaped like a black cloud marked with streaks of fire.
It roused the Hell-Hag: she the dew damp wiped
From off her brow, and through the uncouth maze
Retraced her steps; but ere she reach'd the mouth
Of that drear labyrinth, shuddering she paused,
Nor dared re-enter the diminished Gulf.
As through the dark vaults of some moulder'd Tower
(Which, fearful to approach, the evening Hind
Circles at distance in his homeward way)
The winds breathe hollow, deem'd the plaining groan
Of prison'd spirits; with such fearful voice
Night murmur'd, and the sound through Chaos went.
Leap'd at her call her hideous-fronted brood!
A dark behest they heard, and rush'd on earth;
Since that sad hour, in Camps and Courts adored,
Rebels from God, and Monarchs o'er Mankind!»

From his obscure haunt
Shriek'd Fear, of Cruelty the ghastly Dam,
Feverish yet freezing, eager-paced yet slow,
As she that creeps from forth her swampy reeds,
Ague, the biform Hag! when early Spring
Beams on the marsh-bred vapours.

« Even so» (the exulting Maiden said)
« The sainted Heralds of Good Tidings fell,
And thus they witnessed God! But now the clouds
Treading, and storms beneath their feet, they soar
Higher, and higher soar, and soaring sing
Loud songs of Triumph! O ye spirits of God,
Hover around my mortal agonies!»
She spake, and instantly faint melody
Melts on her ear, soothing and sad, and slow,—
Such Measures, as at calmest midnight heard
By aged Hermit in his holy dream,
Foretell and solace death; and now they rise
Louder, as when with harp and mingled voice
The white-robed[1] multitude of slaughter'd saints
At Heaven's wide-opened portals gratulant
Receive some martyr'd Patriot. The harmony
Entranced the Maid, till each suspended sense
Brief slumber seized, and confused ecstasy.

At length awakening slow, she gazed around:
And through a Mist, the relick of that trance
Still thinning as she gazed, an Isle appear'd,
Its high, o'er-hanging, white, broad-breasted cliffs,
Glass'd on the subject ocean. A vast plain
Stretch'd opposite, where ever and anon

[1] Revel. vi, 9, 11. And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held. And white robes were given unto every one of them, and it was said unto them that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow servants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.

The Plough-man, following sad his meagre team,
Turn'd up fresh sculls unstartled, and the bones
Of fierce hate-breathing combatants, who there
All mingled lay beneath the common earth,
Death's gloomy reconcilement! O'er the Fields
Stept a fair form, repairing all she might,
Her temples olive-wreathed; and where she trod
Fresh flowercts rose, and many a foodful herb.
But wan her cheek, her footsteps insccure,
And anxious pleasure beam'd in her faint eye,
As she had newly left a couch of pain,
Pale Convalescent! (yet some time to rule
With power exclusive o'er the willing world,
That bless'd prophetic mandate then fulfill'd,
Peace be on Earth!) A happy while, but brief,
She seem'd to wander with assiduous feet,
And heal'd the recent harm of chill and blight,
And nursed each plant that fair and virtuous grew.

But soon a deep precursive sound moan'd hollow:
Black rose the clouds, and now (as in a dream)
Their reddening shapes, transformed to Warrior-hosts,
Coursed o'er the Sky, and battled in mid-air.
Nor did not the large blood-drops fall from Heaven
Portentous! while aloft were seen to float,
Like hideous features booming on the mist,
Wan Stains of ominous Light! Resign'd, yet sad,
The fair Form bowed her olive-crowned Brow,
Then o'er the plain with oft-reverted eye
Fled till a Place of Tombs she reach'd, and there
Within a ruined Sepulchre obscure
Found Hiding-place.

The delegated Maid
Gazed through her tears, then in sad tones exclaim'd,
« Thou mild-eyed Form! wherefore, ah! wherefore fled?
The Power of Justice, like a name all Light,
Shone from thy brow; but all they, who unblamed
Dwelt in thy dwellings, call thee Happiness.
Ah! why, uninjured and unprofited,
Should multitudes against their brethren rush?
Why sow they guilt, still reaping Misery?
Lenient of care, thy songs, O Peace! are sweet,
As after showers the perfumed gale of eve,
That flings the cool drops on a feverous cheek:
And gay thy grassy altar piled with fruits.
But boasts the shrine of Dæmon War one charm,
Save that with many an orgie strange and foul,
Dancing around with interwoven arms,
The Maniac Suicide and Giant Murder
Exult in their fierce union? I am sad,
And know not why the simple Peasants crowd
Beneath the Chieftains' standard!» Thus the Maid.

To her the tutelary Spirit replied:
« When Luxury and Lust's exhausted stores
No more can rouse the appetites of Kings;
When the low flattery of their reptile Lords
Falls flat and heavy on the accustom'd ear;
When Eunuchs sing, and Fools buffoonery make,
And Dancers writhe their harlot-limbs in vain;
Then War and all its dread vicissitudes
Pleasingly agitate their stagnant Hearts;
Its hopes, its fears, its victories, its defeats,
Insipid Royalty's keen condiment!
Therefore uninjured and unprofited
(Victims at once and Executioners),
The congregated Husbandmen lay waste
The Vineyard and the Harvest. As along
The Bothnic coast, or southward of the Line,
Though hush'd the Winds and cloudless the high Noon,
Yet if Leviathan, weary of ease,
In sports unwieldy toss his Island-bulk,
Ocean behind him billows, and before
A storm of waves breaks foamy on the strand.
And hence, for times and seasons bloody and dark,
Short Peace shall skin the wounds of causeless War,
And War, his strained sinews knit anew,
Still violate the unfinish'd works of Peace.
But yonder look! for more demands thy view!»
He said: and straightway from the opposite Isle
A vapour sailed, as when a cloud, exhaled
From Egypt's fields that steam hot pestilence,
Travels the sky for many a trackless league,
Till o'er some Death-doom'd land, distant in vain,
It broods incumbent. Forthwith from the Plain,
Facing the Isle, a brighter cloud arose,
And steer'd its course which way the Vapour went.

The Maiden paused, musing what this might mean.
But long time pass'd not, ere that brighter cloud
Return'd more bright; along the plain it swept;
And soon from forth its bursting sides emerged
A dazzling form, broad-bosom'd, bold of eye,
And wild her hair, save where with laurels bound.
Not more majestic stood the healing God,
When from his bow the arrow sped that slew
Huge Python. Shriek'd Ambition's giant throng,
And with them hiss'd the Locust-fiends that crawl'd
And glitter'd in Corruption's slimy track.
Great was their wrath, for short they knew their reign;
And such commotion made they, and uproar,
As when the mad Tornado bellows through
The guilty islands of the western main,
What time departing from their native shores,
Eboe, or Koromantyn's [1] plain of Palms,

[1] The Slaves in the West-Indies consider death as a passport to their native country. This sentiment is thus expressed in the introduction to a Greek Prize-Ode on the Slave-Trade, of which the ideas are better than the language in which they are conveyed.

Ω σκοτου πυλας, Θανατε, προλειπων
Ες γενος σπευδοις υποζευχθεν Ατᾳ·
Ου ξενισθη σῃ γενυων σπαραγμοι;
Ουδ' ολολυγμω,

Αλλα και κυκλοισι χοροιτυποισι
Κ'ασματων χαρᾳ· φοβερος μεν εσοι
Αλλ' ομως Ελευθεριᾳ συνοικεῖς;
Στυγνε Τυραννε!

Δασκιοις επει πτερυγεσσι σησι
Α! Θαλασσιον καθορωντες οιδμα
Αιθεροπλαγτοις υπο ποσσ' ανεισι
Πατριδ' ἐπ' αιαν.

Ενθα μαν Ερασαι Ερωμενησιν
Αμφι πνῃσιν κιτρινων υπ' αλσων,
Οσσ' υπο βροτοις επαθον βροτοι, τα
Δεινα λεγοναι.

LITERAL TRANSLATION.

Leaving the Gates of Darkness, O Death! hasten thou to a Race yoked with Misery! Thou wilt not be received with lacerations of

The infuriate spirits of the Murder'd make
Fierce merriment, and vengeance ask of Heaven.
Warm'd with new influence, the unwholesome plain
Sent up its foulest fogs to meet the Morn:
The Sun that rose on Freedom, rose in blood!

« Maiden beloved, and Delegate of Heaven!»
(To her the tutelary Spirit said)
« Soon shall the Morning struggle into Day,
The stormy Morning into cloudless Noon.
Much hast thou seen, nor all canst understand—
But this be thy best Omen—Save thy Country!»

cheeks, nor with funereal ululation—but with circling dances and the joy of songs. Thou art terrible indeed, yet thou dwellest with Liberty, stera Genius! Borne on thy dark pinions over the swelling of Ocean, they return to their native country. There, by the side of Fountains beneath Citron-groves, the lovers tell to their beloved what horrors, being Men, they had endured from Men.

Thus saying, from the answering Maid he pass'd,
And with him disappear'd the Heavenly Vision.

« Glory to Thee, Father of Earth and Heaven!
All-conscious Presence of the Universe!
Nature's vast Ever-acting Energy!
In Will, in Deed, Impulse of All to All!
Whether thy love with unrefracted ray
Beam on the Prophet's purged eye, or if
Diseasing realms the enthusiast, wild of thought,
Scatter new frenzies on the infected throng,
Thou both inspiring and predooming both,
Fit instruments and best, of perfect end:
Glory to Thee, Father of Earth and Heaven!»

And first a landscape rose,
More wild and waste and desolate than where
The white bear, drifting on a field of ice,
Howls to her sunder'd cubs with piteous rage
And savage agony.

Sibylline Leaves.

I. POEMS OCCASIONED BY POLITICAL EVENTS OR FEELINGS CONNECTED WITH THEM.

When I have borne in memory what has tamed
Great nations, how ennobling thoughts depart
When men change swords for ledgers, and desert
The student's bower for gold, some fears unnamed
I had, my country! Am I to be blamed?
But, when I think of Thee, and what Thou art,
Verily, in the bottom of my heart,
Of those unfilial fears I am ashamed.
But dearly must we prize thee; we who find
In thee a bulwark of the cause of men;
And I by my affection was beguiled.
What wonder if a poet, now and then,
Among the many movements of his mind,
Felt for thee as a Lover or a Child.

WORDSWORTH.

ODE TO THE DEPARTING YEAR.[1]

Ἰοὺ, ἰού, ὦ ὦ κακά.
Ὑπ' αὖ με δεινὸς ὀρθομαντείας πόνος
Στροβεῖ, ταράσσων φροιμίοις ἐφημίοις.
* * * * * * *
Τό μέλλον ἥξει. Καὶ σὺ μην τάχει παρὼν
Ἄγαν γ' ἀληθόμαντιν μ' ἐρεῖς.

ÆSCHYL. *Agam.* 1225.

ARGUMENT.

The Ode commences with an Address to the Divine Providence, that regulates into one vast harmony all the events of time, however calamitous some of them may appear to mortals. The second Strophe calls on men to suspend their private joys and sorrows, and devote them for a while to the cause of human nature in general. The first Epode speaks of the Empress of Russia, who died of an apoplexy on the 17th of November, 1796; having just concluded a subsidiary treaty with the Kings combined against France. The first and second Antistrophe describe the Image of the Departing Year, etc. as in a vision. The second Epode prophesies, in anguish of spirit, the downfall of this country.

[1] This Ode was composed on the 24th, 25th, and 26th days of December, 1796: and was first published on the last day of that year.

I.

SPIRIT who sweepest the wild Harp of Time!
It is most hard, with an untroubled ear
Thy dark inwoven harmonies to hear!
Yet, mine eye fix'd on Heaven's unchanging clime
Long when I listen'd, free from mortal fear,
With inward stillness, and submitted mind;
When lo! its folds far waving on the wind,
I saw the train of the DEPARTING YEAR!
Starting from my silent sadness,
Then with no unholy madness,
Ere yet the enter'd cloud foreclosed my sight,
I raised the impetuous song, and solemnized his flight.

II.

Hither, from the recent tomb,
From the prison's direr gloom,
From Distemper's midnight anguish;
And thence, where Poverty doth waste and languish;
Or where, his two bright torches blending,
Love illumines manhood's maze;
Or where, o'er cradled infants bending,
Hope has fix'd her wishful gaze,
Hither, in perplexed dance,
Ye Woes! ye young-eyed Joys! advance!

By Time's wild harp, and by the hand
Whose indefatigable sweep
Raises its fateful strings from sleep,
I bid you haste, a mix'd tumultuous band!
From every private bower,
And each domestic hearth,
Haste for one solemn hour;
And with a loud and yet a louder voice,
O'er Nature struggling in portentous birth
Weep and rejoice!
Still echoes the dread Name that o'er the earth
Let slip the storm, and woke the brood of Hell:
And now advance in saintly Jubilee
Justice and Truth! They too have heard thy spell,
They too obey thy name, Divinest Liberty!

III.

I mark'd Ambition in his war-array!
I heard the mailed Monarch's troublous cry—
"Ah! wherefore does the Northern Conqueress stay!
Groans not her chariot on its onward way?"
Fly, mailed Monarch, fly!
Stunn'd by Death's twice mortal mace,
No more on Murder's lurid face
The insatiate hag shall gloat with drunken eye!
Manes of the unnumber'd slain!
Ye that gasp'd on Warsaw's plain!
Ye that erst at Ismail's tower,
When human ruin choked the streams,
Fell in conquest's glutted hour,
'Mid women's shrieks and infants' screams!
Spirits of the uncoffin'd slain,
Sudden blasts of triumph swelling,
Oft, at night, in misty train,
Rush around her narrow dwelling!
The exterminating fiend is fled—
(Foul her life, and dark her doom)
Mighty armies of the dead
Dance like death-fires round her tomb!
Then with prophetic song relate,
Each some tyrant-murderer's fate!

IV.

Departing Year! 't was on no earthly shore
My soul beheld thy vision! Where alone,
Voiceless and stern, before the cloudy throne,
Aye Memory sits: thy robe inscribed with gore,
With many an unimaginable groan
Thou storied'st thy sad hours! Silence ensued,
Deep silence o'er the ethereal multitude,
Whose locks with wreaths, whose wreaths with glories shone.
Then, his eye wild ardours glancing,
From the choired Gods advancing,
The Spirit of the Earth made reverence meet,
And stood up, beautiful, before the cloudy seat.

V.

Throughout the blissful throng,
Hush'd were harp and song:
Till wheeling round the throne the Lampads seven
(The mystic Words of Heaven),
Permissive signal make:
The fervent Spirit bow'd, then spread his wings and spake!

"Thou in stormy blackness throning
Love and uncreated Light,
By the Earth's unsolaced groaning,
Seize thy terrors, Arm of might!
By Peace with proffer'd insult scared,
Masked Hate and envying Scorn!
By Years of Havoc yet unborn!
And Hunger's bosom to the frost-winds bared!
But chief by Afric's wrongs,
Strange, horrible, and foul!
By what deep guilt belongs
To the deaf Synod, 'full of gifts and lies!'
By Wealth's insensate laugh! by Torture's howl!
Avenger, rise!
For ever shall the thankless Island scowl,
Her quiver full, and with unbroken bow?
Speak! from thy storm-black Heaven, O speak aloud!
And on the darkling foe
Open thine eye of fire from some uncertain cloud!
O dart the flash! O rise and deal the blow!
The past to thee, to thee the future cries!
Hark! how wide Nature joins her groans below!
Rise, God of Nature! rise."

VI.

The voice had ceased, the vision fled;
Yet still I gasp'd and reel'd with dread.
And ever, when the dream of night
Renews the phantom to my sight,
Cold sweat-drops gather on my limbs;
My ears throb hot; my eye-balls start;
My brain with horrid tumult swims;
Wild is the tempest of my heart;
And my thick and struggling breath
Imitates the toil of Death!
No stranger agony confounds
The Soldier on the war-field spread,
When all foredone with toil and wounds,
Death-like he dozes among heaps of dead!
(The strife is o'er, the day-light fled,
And the night-wind clamours hoarse!
See! the starting wretch's head
Lies pillow'd on a brother's corse!)

VII.

Not yet enslaved, not wholly vile,
O Albion! O my mother Isle!
Thy valleys, fair as Eden's bowers,
Glitter green with sunny showers;
Thy grassy uplands' gentle swells
Echo to the bleat of flocks
(Those grassy hills, those glittering dells
Proudly ramparted with rocks);
And Ocean, 'mid his uproar wild
Speaks safety to his ISLAND-CHILD!
Hence, for many a fearless age
Has social Quiet loved thy shore!
Nor ever proud Invader's rage
Or sack'd thy towers, or stain'd thy fields with gore.

VIII.

Abandon'd of Heaven! mad Avarice thy guide,
At cowardly distance, yet kindling with pride—

'Mid thy herds and thy corn-fields secure thou hast stood,
And join'd the wild yelling of Famine and Blood!
The nations curse thee! They with eager wondering
Shall hear Destruction, like a Vulture, scream!
Strange-eyed Destruction! who with many a dream
Of central fires through nether seas upthundering
Soothes her fierce solitude; yet as she lies
By livid fount, or red volcanic stream,
If ever to her lidless dragon-eyes,
O Albion! thy predestined ruins rise,
The fiend-hag on her perilous couch doth leap,
Muttering distemper'd triumph in her charmed sleep.

IX.

Away, my soul, away!
In vain, in vain the Birds of warning sing—
And hark! I hear the famish'd brood of prey
Flap their lank pennons on the groaning wind!
Away, my soul, away!
I, unpartaking of the evil thing,
With daily prayer and daily toil
Soliciting for food my scanty soil,
Have wail'd my country with a loud lament.
Now I recentre my immortal mind
In the deep sabbath of meek self-content;
Cleansed from the vaporous passions that bedim
God's Image, sister of the Seraphim.

FRANCE.

AN ODE.

I.

Ye Clouds! that far above me float and pause,
Whose pathless march no mortal may controul!
Ye Ocean-Waves! that, wheresoe'er ye roll,
Yield homage only to eternal laws!
Ye Woods! that listen to the night-birds' singing,
Midway the smooth and perilous slope reclined,
Save when your own imperious branches swinging,
Have made a solemn music of the wind!
Where, like a man beloved of God,
Through glooms, which never woodman trod,
How oft, pursuing fancies holy,
My moonlight way o'er flowering weeds I wound,
Inspired, beyond the guess of folly,
By each rude shape and wild unconquerable sound!
O ye loud Waves! and O ye Forests high!
And O ye Clouds that far above me soar'd!
Thou rising Sun! thou blue rejoicing Sky!
Yea, every thing that is and will be free!
Bear witness for me, wheresoe'er ye be,
With what deep worship I have still adored
The spirit of divinest Liberty.

II.

When France in wrath her giant-limbs uprear'd,
And with that oath, which smote air, earth and sea,
Stamp'd her strong foot and said she would be free,
Bear witness for me, how I hoped and fear'd!
With what a joy my lofty gratulation
Unawed I sang, amid a slavish band:
And when to whelm the disenchanted nation,
Like fiends embattled by a wizard's wand,
The Monarchs march'd in evil day,
And Britain join'd the dire array;
Though dear her shores and circling ocean,
Though many friendships, many youthful loves
Had swoln the patriot emotion,
And flung a magic light o'er all her hills and groves;
Yet still my voice, unalter'd, sang defeat
To all that braved the tyrant-quelling lance,
And shame too long delay'd and vain retreat!
For ne'er, O Liberty! with partial aim
I dimm'd thy light or damp'd thy holy flame;
But bless'd the pæans of deliver'd France,
And hung my head and wept at Britain's name.

III.

"And what," I said, "though Blasphemy's loud scream
With that sweet music of deliverance strove!
Though all the fierce and drunken passions wove
A dance more wild than e'er was maniac's dream!
Ye storms, that round the dawning east assembled,
The Sun was rising, though he hid his light!
And when, to soothe my soul, that hoped and trembled,
The dissonance ceased, and all seemed calm and bright;
When France her front deep-scarr'd and gory
Conceal'd with clustering wreaths of glory;
When, insupportably advancing,
Her arm made mockery of the warrior's tramp;
While timid looks of fury glancing,
Domestic treason, crush'd beneath her fatal stamp,
Writhed like a wounded dragon in his gore;
Then I reproach'd my fears that would not flee;
"And soon," I said, "shall Wisdom teach her lore
In the low huts of them that toil and groan!
And, conquering by her happiness alone,
Shall France compel the nations to be free,
Till Love and Joy look round, and call the Earth their own."

IV.

Forgive me, Freedom! O forgive those dreams!
I hear thy voice, I hear thy loud lament,
From bleak Helvetia's icy caverns sent—
I hear thy groans upon her blood-stain'd streams!
Heroes, that for your peaceful country perish'd;
And ye that, fleeing, spot your mountain-snows
With bleeding wounds; forgive me that I cherish'd
One thought that ever bless'd your cruel foes!
To scatter rage, and traitorous guilt,
Where peace her jealous home had built;
A patriot-race to disinherit
Of all that made their stormy wilds so dear;
And with inexpiable spirit
To taint the bloodless freedom of the mountaineer—
O France, that mockest Heaven, adulterous, blind,
And patriot only in pernicious toils!
Are these thy boasts, Champion of human kind?
To mix with Kings in the low lust of sway,
Yell in the hunt, and share the murderous prey;
To insult the shrine of Liberty with spoils
From freemen torn; to tempt and to betray?

V.

The Sensual and the Dark rebel in vain,
Slaves by their own compulsion! In mad game
They burst their manacles and wear the name
Of Freedom, graven on a heavier chain!

O Liberty! with profitless endeavour
Have I pursued thee, many a weary hour;
But thou nor swell'st the victor's strain, nor ever
Didst breathe thy soul in forms of human power.
Alike from all, howe'er they praise thee
(Not prayer, nor boastful name delays thee),
Alike from Priesteraft's harpy minions,
And factious Blasphemy's obscener slaves,
Thou speedest on thy subtle pinions,
The guide of homeless winds, and playmate of the waves!
And there I felt thee!—on that sea-cliff's verge,
Whose pines, scarce travell'd by the breeze above,
Had made one murmur with the distant surge!
Yes, while I stood and gazed, my temples bare,
And shot my being through earth, sea and air,
Possessing all things with intensest love,
O Liberty! my spirit felt thee there.

February, 1797.

FEARS IN SOLITUDE.

WRITTEN IN APRIL, 1798, DURING THE ALARM OF AN INVASION.

A GREEN and silent spot, amid the hills,
A small and silent dell! O'er stiller place
No singing sky-lark ever poised himself.
The hills are heathy, save that swelling slope,
Which hath a gay and gorgeous covering on,
All golden with the never-bloomless furze,
Which now blooms most profusely: but the dell,
Bathed by the mist, is fresh and delicate
As vernal corn-field, or the unripe flax,
When, through its half-transparent stalks, at eve,
The level Sunshine glimmers with green light.
Oh! 't is a quiet spirit-healing nook!
Which all, methinks, would love; but chiefly he,
The humble man, who, in his youthful years,
Knew just so much of folly, as had made
His early manhood more securely wise!
Here he might lie on fern or wither'd heath,
While from the singing-lark (that sings unseen
The minstrelsy that solitude loves best),
And from the Sun, and from the breezy Air,
Sweet influences trembled o'er his frame;
And he, with many feelings, many thoughts,
Made up a meditative joy, and found
Religious meanings in the forms of nature!
And so, his senses gradually wrapt
In a half sleep, he dreams of better worlds,
And dreaming hears thee still, O singing-lark!
That singest like an angel in the clouds!

My God! it is a melancholy thing
For such a man, who would full fain preserve
His soul in calmness, yet perforce must feel
For all his human brethren—O my God!
It weighs upon the heart, that he must think
What uproar and what strife may now be stirring
This way or that way o'er these silent hills—
Invasion, and the thunder and the shout,
And all the crash of onset; fear and rage,
And undetermined conflict—even now,
Even now, perchance, and in his native isle:
Carnage and groans beneath this blessed Sun!
We have offended, Oh! my countrymen!
We have offended very grievously,
And been most tyrannous. From east to west
A groan of accusation pierces Heaven!
The wretched plead against us; multitudes
Countless and vehement, the Sons of God,
Our Brethren! Like a cloud that travels on,
Steam'd up from Cairo's swamps of pestilence,
Even so, my countrymen! have we gone forth
And borne to distant tribes slavery and pangs,
And, deadlier far, our vices, whose deep taint
With slow perdition murders the whole man,
His body and his soul! Meanwhile, at home,
All individual dignity and power
Engulf'd in Courts, Committees, Institutions,
Associations and Societies,
A vain, speech-mouthing, speech-reporting Guild,
One Benefit-Club for mutual flattery,
We have drunk up, demure as at a grace,
Pollutions from the brimming cup of wealth;
Contemptuous of all honourable rule,
Yet bartering freedom and the poor man's life
For gold, as at a market! The sweet words
Of Christian promise, words that even yet
Might stem destruction, were they wisely preach'd,
Are mutter'd o'er by men, whose tones proclaim
How flat and wearisome they feel their trade:
Rank scoffers some, but most too indolent
To deem them falsehoods or to know their truth.
Oh! blasphemous! the book of life is made
A superstitious instrument, on which
We gabble o'er the oaths we mean to break;
For all must swear—all and in every place,
College and wharf, council and justice-court;
All, all must swear, the briber and the bribed,
Merchant and lawyer, senator and priest,
The rich, the poor, the old man and the young;
All, all make up one scheme of perjury,
That faith doth reel; the very name of God
Sounds like a juggler's charm; and, bold with joy,
Forth from his dark and lonely hiding-place,
(Portentous sight!) the owlet Atheism,
Sailing on obscene wings athwart the noon,
Drops his blue-fringed lids, and holds them close,
And hooting at the glorious Sun in Heaven,
Cries out, "Where is it?"

Thankless too for peace
(Peace long preserved by fleets and perilous seas),
Secure from actual warfare, we have loved
To swell the war-whoop, passionate for war!
Alas! for ages ignorant of all
Its ghastlier workings (famine or blue plague,
Battle, or siege, or flight through wintry snows),
We, this whole people, have been clamorous
For war and bloodshed; animating sports,
The which we pay for as a thing to talk of,
Spectators and not combatants! No Guess
Anticipative of a wrong unfelt,
No speculation or contingency,
However dim and vague, too vague and dim
To yield a justifying cause; and forth
(Stuffed out with big preamble, holy names,

And adjurations of the God in Heaven),
We send our mandates for the certain death
Of thousands and ten thousands! Boys and girls,
And women, that would groan to see a child
Pull off an insect's leg, all read of war,
The best amusement for our morning-meal!
The poor wretch, who has learnt his only prayers
From curses, who knows scarcely words enough
To ask a blessing from his Heavenly Father,
Becomes a fluent phraseman, absolute
And technical in victories and defeats,
And all our dainty terms for fratricide;
Terms which we trundle smoothly o'er our tongues
Like mere abstractions, empty sounds to which
We join no feeling and attach no form!
As if the soldier died without a wound;
As if the fibres of this godlike frame
Were gored without a pang; as if the wretch,
Who fell in battle, doing bloody deeds,
Pass'd off to Heaven, translated and not kill'd;
As though he had no wife to pine for him,
No God to judge him! Therefore, evil days
Are coming on us, O my countrymen!
And what if all-avenging Providence,
Strong and retributive, should make us know
The meaning of our words, force us to feel
The desolation and the agony
Of our fierce doings!

Spare us yet awhile,
Father and God! O! spare us yet awhile!
Oh! let not English women drag their flight
Fainting beneath the burthen of their babes,
Of the sweet infants, that but yesterday
Laugh'd at the breast! Sons, brothers, husbands, all
Who ever gazed with fondness on the forms
Which grew up with you round the same fire-side,
And all who ever heard the sabbath-bells
Without the infidel's scorn, make yourselves pure!
Stand forth! be men! repel an impious foe,
Impious and false, a light yet cruel race,
Who laugh away all virtue, mingling mirth
With deeds of murder; and still promising
Freedom, themselves too sensual to be free,
Poison life's amities, and cheat the heart
Of faith and quiet hope, and all that soothes
And all that lifts the spirit! Stand we forth;
Render them back upon the insulted ocean,
And let them toss as idly on its waves
As the vile sea-weed, which some mountain-blast
Swept from our shores! And oh! may we return
Not with a drunken triumph, but with fear,
Repenting of the wrongs with which we stung
So fierce a foe to frenzy!

I have told,
O Britons! O my brethren! I have told
Most bitter truth, but without bitterness.
Nor deem my zeal or factious or mis-timed;
For never can true courage dwell with them,
Who, playing tricks with conscience, dare not look
At their own vices. We have been too long
Dupes of a deep delusion! Some, belike,
Groaning with restless enmity, expect
All change from change of constituted power;
As if a Government had been a robe,
On which our vice and wretchedness were tagg'd
Like fancy points and fringes, with the robe
Pull'd off at pleasure. Fondly these attach
A radical causation to a few
Poor drudges of chastising Providence,
Who borrow all their hues and qualities
From our own folly and rank wickedness,
Which gave them birth and nursed them. Others, meanwhile,
Dote with a mad idolatry; and all
Who will not fall before their images,
And yield them worship, they are enemies
Even of their country!

Such have I been deem'd—
But, O dear Britain! O my Mother Isle!
Needs must thou prove a name most dear and holy
To me, a son, a brother, and a friend,
A husband, and a father! who revere
All bonds of natural love, and find them all
Within the limits of thy rocky shores.
O native Britain! O my Mother Isle!
How shouldst thou prove aught else but dear and holy
To me, who from thy lakes and mountain-hills,
Thy clouds, thy quiet dales, thy rocks and seas,
Have drunk in all my intellectual life,
All sweet sensations, all ennobling thoughts,
All adoration of the God in nature,
All lovely and all honourable things,
Whatever makes this mortal spirit feel
The joy and greatness of its future being?
There lives nor form nor feeling in my soul
Unborrow'd from my country. O divine
And beauteous island! thou hast been my sole
And most magnificent temple, in the which
I walk with awe, and sing my stately songs,
Loving the God that made me!

May my fears,
My filial fears, be vain! and may the vaunts
And menace of the vengeful enemy
Pass like the gust, that roar'd and died away
In the distant tree: which heard, and only heard
In this low dell, bow'd not the delicate grass.

But now the gentle dew-fall sends abroad
The fruit-like perfume of the golden furze:
The light has left the summit of the hill,
Though still a sunny gleam lies beautiful,
Aslant the ivied beacon. Now farewell,
Farewell, awhile, O soft and silent spot!
On the green sheep-track, up the heathy hill,
Homeward I wind my way; and lo! recall'd
From bodings that have well nigh wearied me,
I find myself upon the brow, and pause
Startled! And after lonely sojourning
In such a quiet and surrounded nook,
This burst of prospect, here the shadowy main,
Dim-tinted, there the mighty majesty
Of that huge amphitheatre of rich
And elmy fields, seems like society—
Conversing with the mind, and giving it
A livelier impulse and a dance of thought!
And now, beloved Stowey! I behold
Thy church-tower, and, methinks, the four huge elms

Clustering, which mark the mansion of my friend:
And close behind them, hidden from my view,
Is my own lowly cottage, where my babe
And my babe's mother dwell in peace! With light
And quicken'd footsteps thitherward I tend,
Remembering thee, O green and silent dell!
And grateful, that, by nature's quietness
And solitary musings, all my heart
Is soften'd, and made worthy to indulge
Love, and the thoughts that yearn for human kind.

Nether Stowey, April 28th, 1798.

FIRE, FAMINE, AND SLAUGHTER.

A WAR ECLOGUE.

WITH AN APOLOGETIC PREFACE. [1]

The Scene a desolated Tract in La Vendée. FAMINE *is discovered lying on the ground; to her enter* FIRE *and* SLAUGHTER.

FAMINE.

SISTERS! sisters! who sent you here?

SLAUGHTER (*to* FIRE).

I will whisper it in her ear.

FIRE.

No! no! no!
Spirits hear what spirits tell:
'T will make a holiday in Hell.
No! no! no!
Myself, I named him once below,
And all the souls, that damned be,
Leap'd up at once in anarchy,
Clapp'd their hands and danced for glee.
They no longer heeded me;
But laugh'd to hear Hell's burning rafters
Unwillingly re-echo laughters!
No! no! no!
Spirits hear what spirits tell:
'T will make a holiday in Hell!

FAMINE.

Whisper it, sister! so and so!
In a dark hint, soft and slow.

SLAUGHTER.

Letters four do form his name—
And who sent you?

BOTH.

The same! the same!

SLAUGHTER.

He came by stealth, and unlock'd my den,
And I have drunk the blood since then
Of thrice three hundred thousand men.

BOTH.

Who bade you do it?

SLAUGHTER.

The same! the same!

Letters four do form his name.
He let me loose, and cried Halloo!
To him alone the praise is due.

FAMINE.

Thanks, sister, thanks! the men have bled,
Their wives and their children faint for bread.
I stood in a swampy field of battle;
With bones and skulls I made a rattle,
To frighten the wolf and carrion-crow,
And the homeless dog—but they would not go.
So off I flew; for how could I bear
To see them gorge their dainty fare?
I heard a groan and a peevish squall,
And through the chink of a cottage-wall—
Can you guess what I saw there?

BOTH.

Whisper it, sister! in our ear.

FAMINE.

A baby beat its dying mother:
I had starved the one, and was starving the other!

BOTH.

Who bade you do 't?

FAMINE.

The same! the same!
Letters four do form his name.
He let me loose, and cried Halloo!
To him alone the praise is due.

FIRE.

Sisters! I from Ireland came!
Hedge and corn-fields all on flame,
I triumph'd o'er the setting sun!
And all the while the work was done,
On as I strode with my huge strides,
I flung back my head and I held my sides,
It was so rare a piece of fun
To see the swelter'd cattle run
With uncouth gallop through the night,
Scared by the red and noisy light!
By the light of his own blazing cot
Was many a naked rebel shot:
The house-stream met the flame and hiss'd,
While crash! fell in the roof, I wist,
On some of those old bed-rid nurses,
That deal in discontent and curses.

BOTH.

Who bade you do 't?

FIRE.

The same! the same!
Letters four do form his name.
He let me loose, and cried Halloo!
To him alone the praise is due.

ALL.

He let us loose, and cried Halloo!
How shall we yield him honour due?

FAMINE.

Wisdom comes with lack of food.
I 'll gnaw, I 'll gnaw the multitude,

[1] See Appendix to «SIBYLLINE LEAVES.»

Till the cup of rage o'erbrim:
They shall seize him and his brood—

SLAUGHTER.

They shall tear him limb from limb!

FIRE.

O thankless beldames and untrue!
And is this all that you can do
For him, who did so much for you?
Ninety months he, by my troth!
Hath richly cater'd for you both;
And in an hour would you repay
An eight years' work?—Away! away!
I alone am faithful! I
Cling to him everlastingly.

1796.

RECANTATION,

ILLUSTRATED IN THE STORY OF THE MAD OX.

An Ox, long fed with musty hay,
And work'd with yoke and chain,
Was turn'd out on an April day,
When fields are in their best array,
And growing grasses sparkle gay,
At once with sun and rain.

The grass was fine, the sun was bright,
With truth I may aver it;
The Ox was glad, as well he might,
Thought a green meadow no bad sight,
And frisk'd to show his huge delight,
Much like a beast of spirit.

« Stop, neighbours! stop! why these alarms?
The Ox is only glad.»—
But still they pour from cots and farms—
Halloo! the parish is up in arms
(A *hoaxing* hunt have always charms),
Halloo! the Ox is mad.

The frighted beast scamper'd about,
Plunge! through the hedge he drove—
The mob pursue with hideous rout,
A bull-dog fastens on his snout,
He gores the dog, his tongue hangs out—
He 's mad, he 's mad, by Jove!

« Stop, neighbours, stop!» aloud did call
A sage of sober hue.
But all at once on him they fall,
And women squeak and children squall,
« What! would you have him toss us all!
And, damme! who are you?»

Ah, hapless sage! his ears they stun,
And curse him o'er and o'er—
« You bloody-minded dog!» (cries one,)
« To slit your windpipe were good fun—
'Od bl— you for an *impious*[1] son
Of a presbyterian w—re!

« You 'd have him gore the parish-priest,
And run against the altar—
You *Fiend!*»—The sage his warnings ceased,
And North, and South, and West, and East,
Halloo! they follow the poor beast,
Mat, Dick, Tom, Bob, and Walter.

Old Lewis, 't was his evil day,
Stood trembling in his shoes;
The Ox was his—what could he say?
His legs were stiffen'd with dismay,
The Ox ran o'er him 'mid the fray,
And gave him his death's bruise.

The frighted beast ran on—but here,
The Gospel scarce more true is—
My muse stops short in mid-career—
Nay! gentle reader! do not sneer,
I cannot chuse but drop a tear,
A tear for good old Lewis.

The frighted beast ran through the town,
All follow'd, boy and dad,
Bull-dog, Parson, Shopman, Clown,
The Publicans rush'd from the Crown,
« Halloo! hamstring him! cut him down!»
They drove the poor Ox mad.

Should you a rat to madness teaze,
Why even a rat might plague you:
There 's no philosopher but sees
That rage and fear are *one* disease—
Though that may burn and this may freeze,
They 're both alike the ague.

And so this Ox, in frantic mood,
Faced round like any Bull—
The mob turn'd tail, and he pursued,
Till they with fright and fear were stew'd,
And not a chick of all this brood
But had his belly-full.

Old Nick 's astride the beast, 't is clear—
Old Nicholas to a tittle!
But all agree, he 'd disappear,
Would but the parson venture near,
And through his teeth, right o'er the steer,
Squirt out some fasting-spittle.[1]

Achilles was a warrior fleet,
The Trojans he could worry—
Our parson too was swift of feet,
But show'd it chiefly in retreat!
The victor Ox scour'd down the street,
The mob fled hurry-skurry.

Through gardens, lanes, and fields new-plough'd,
Through *his* hedge and through *her* hedge,[2]
He plunged, and toss'd, and bellow'd loud,
Till in his madness he grew proud
To see this helter-skelter crowd,
That had more wrath than courage.

[1] One of the many *fine* words which the most uneducated had about this time a constant opportunity of acquiring from the sermons in the pulpit, and the proclamations on the —— —— corners.

[1] According to the superstition of the West Countries, if you meet the Devil, you may either cut him in half with a straw, or you may cause him instantly to disappear by spitting over his horns.

Alas! to mend the breaches wide
He made for these poor ninnies,
They all must work, whate'er betide,
Both days and months, and pay beside
(Sad news for Avarice and for Pride)
A sight of golden guineas.

But here once more to view did pop
The man that kept his senses.
And now he cried—« Stop, neighbours! stop!
The Ox is mad! I would not swop,
No, not a school-boy's farthing top,
For all the parish fences.

« The Ox is mad! Ho! Dick, Bob, Mat!
What means this coward fuss?
Ho! stretch this rope across the plat—
'T will trip him up—or if not that,
Why damme! we must lay him flat—
See, here 's my blunderbuss!»

« A lying dog! just now he said,
The Ox was only glad.
Let 's break his presbyterian head!»—
« Hush!» quoth the sage, « you 've been misled,
No quarrels now—let 's all make head—
You drove the poor Ox mad!»

As thus I sat in careless chat,
With the morning's wet newspaper,
In eager haste, without his hat,
As blind and blundering as a bat,
In came that fierce aristocrat,
Our pursy woollen-draper.

And so my Muse perforce drew bit,
And in he rush'd and panted:—
« Well, have you heard?»—« No! not a whit.»
« What! han't you heard?»—« Come, out with it!»
« That Tierney votes for Mister Pitt,
And Sheridan 's *recanted.*»

II. LOVE POEMS.

Quas humilis tenero stylus olim effudit in ævo.
Perlegis hic lacrymas, et quod pharetratus acutâ
Ille puer puero fecit mihi cuspide vulnus,
Omnia paulatim consumit longior ætas,
Vivendoque simul morimur, rapimurque manendo.
Ipse mihi collatus enim non ille videbor:
Frons alia est, moresque alii, nova mentis imago,
Voxque aliud sonat—
Pectore nunc gelido calidos miseremur amantes,
Jamque arsisse pudet. Veteres tranquilla tumultus
Mens horret relegensque alium putat ista locutum.
PETRARCH.

INTRODUCTION TO THE TALE OF THE DARK LADIE.

The following Poem is intended as the introduction to a somewhat longer one. The use of the old Ballad word *Ladie* for Lady, is the only piece of obsoleteness in it; and as it is professedly a tale of ancient times, I trust that the affectionate lovers of venerable antiquity (as Camden says) will grant me their pardon, and perhaps may be induced to admit a force and propriety in it. A heavier objection may be adduced against the author, that in these times of fear and expectation, when novelties *explode* around us in all directions, he should presume to offer to the public a silly tale of old-fashioned love: and five years ago, I own I should have allowed and felt the force of this objection. But, alas! explosion has succeeded explosion so rapidly, that novelty itself ceases to appear new; and it is possible that now even a simple story, wholly uninspired with politics or personality, may find some attention amid the hubbub of revolutions, as to those who have remained a long time by the falls of Niagara, the lowest whispering becomes distinctly audible. S. T. C.

Dec. 21, 1799.

O LEAVE the lily on its stem;
O leave the rose upon the spray;
O leave the elder-bloom, fair maids!
And listen to my lay.

A cypress and a myrtle-bough
This morn around my harp you twined,
Because it fashion'd mournfully
Its murmurs in the wind.

And now a Tale of Love and Woe,
A woeful Tale of Love I sing;
Hark, gentle maidens, hark! it sighs
And trembles on the string.

But most, my own dear Genevieve,
It sighs and trembles most for thee!
O come, and hear what cruel wrongs
Befel the Dark Ladie.

Few sorrows hath she of her own,
My hope, my joy, my Genevieve!
She loves me best, whene'er I sing
The songs that make her grieve.

All thoughts, all passions, all delights,
Whatever stir this mortal frame,
All are but ministers of Love,
And feed his sacred flame.

Oh! ever in my waking dreams,
I dwell upon that happy hour,
When midway on the mount I sate,
Beside the ruin'd tower.

The moonshine, stealing o'er the scene,
Had blended with the lights of eve;
And she was there, my hope, my joy,
My own dear Genevieve!

She lean'd against the armed man,
The statue of the armed knight;
She stood and listen'd to my harp,
Amid the ling'ring light.

I play'd a sad and doleful air,
I sang an old and moving story—
An old rude song, that fitted well
That ruin wild and hoary.

She listen'd with a flitting blush,
With downcast eyes and modest grace;
For well she knew, I could not chuse
But gaze upon her face.

I told her of the Knight that wore
Upon his shield a burning brand;
And how for ten long years he woo'd
The Ladie of the Land:

I told her how he pined: and ah!
The deep, the low, the pleading tone
With which I sung another's love,
Interpreted my own.

She listen'd with a flitting blush;
With downcast eyes, and modest grace;
And she forgave me, that I gazed,
Too fondly on her face!

But when I told the cruel scorn
That crazed this bold and lovely Knight,
And how he roam'd the mountain-woods,
Nor rested day or night.

And how he cross'd the woodman's paths,
Through briars and swampy mosses beat;
How boughs rebounding scourged his limbs,
And low stubs gored his feet;

That sometimes from the savage den,
And sometimes from the darksome shade,
And sometimes starting up at once
In green and sunny glade;

There came and look'd him in the face
An Angel beautiful and bright;
And how he knew it was a Fiend,
This miserable Knight!

And how, unknowing what he did,
He leapt amid a lawless band,
And saved from outrage worse than death
The Ladie of the Land!

And how she wept, and clasp'd his knees;
And how she tended him in vain—
And meekly strove to expiate
The scorn that crazed his brain:

And how she nursed him in a cave;
And how his madness went away,
When on the yellow forest-leaves
A dying man he lay;

His dying words—but when I reach'd
That tend'rest strain of all the ditty,
My falt'ring voice and pausing harp
Disturb'd her soul with pity!

All impulses of soul and sense
Had thrill'd my guiltless Genevieve;
The music and the doleful tale,
The rich and balmy eve;

And hopes and fears that kindle hope,
An undistinguishable throng,
And gentle wishes long subdued,
Subdued and cherish'd long!

She wept with pity and delight,
She blush'd with love and maiden-shame
And, like the murmurs of a dream,
I heard her breathe my name.

I saw her bosom heave and swell,
Heave and swell with inward sighs—
I could not chuse but love to see
Her gentle bosom rise.

Her wet cheek glow'd: she stept aside,
As conscious of my look she stepp'd;
Then suddenly, with tim'rous eye,
She flew to me and wept.

She half enclosed me with her arms,
She press'd me with a meek embrace;
And bending back her head, look'd up,
And gazed upon my face.

'T was partly love, and partly fear,
And partly 't was a bashful art,
That I might rather feel than see
The swelling of her heart.

I calm'd her fears, and she was calm,
And told her love with virgin pride;
And so I won my Genevievé,
My bright and beauteous bride.

And now once more a tale of woe,
A woeful tale of love I sing:
For thee, my Genevieve! it sighs,
And trembles on the string.

When last I sang the cruel scorn
That crazed this bold and lonely Knight,
And how he roam'd the mountain-woods,
Nor rested day or night;

I promised thee a sister tale
Of man's perfidious cruelty:
Come, then, and hear what cruel wrong
Befel the Dark Ladie.

LEWTI, OR THE CIRCASSIAN LOVE-CHAUNT.

At midnight by the stream I roved,
To forget the form I loved.
Image of Lewti! from my mind
Depart; for Lewti is not kind.

The moon was high, the moonlight gleam
And the shadow of a star
Heaved upon Tamaha's stream;
But the rock shone brighter far,
The rock half shelter'd from my view
By pendant boughs of tressy yew—
So shines my Lewti's forehead fair,
Gleaming through her sable hair.
Image of Lewti! from my mind
Depart; for Lewti is not kind.

I saw a cloud of palest hue,
Onward to the moon it pass'd;
Still brighter and more bright it grew,
With floating colours not a few,
Till it reach'd the moon at last:
Then the cloud was wholly bright
With a rich and amber light!
And so with many a hope I seek
And with such joy I find my Lewti:
And even so my pale wan cheek
Drinks in as deep a flush of beauty!
Nay, treacherous image! leave my mind,
If Lewti never will be kind.

The little cloud—it floats away,
Away it goes; away so soon?
Alas! it has no power to stay:
Its hues are dim, its hues are grey—
Away it passes from the moon!
How mournfully it seems to fly,
Ever fading more and more,
To joyless regions of the sky—
And now 't is whiter than before!
As white as my poor cheek will be,
When, Lewti! on my couch I lie,
A dying man for love of thee.
Nay, treacherous image! leave my mind—
And yet thou didst not look unkind.

I saw a vapour in the sky,
Thin, and white, and very high;
I ne'er beheld so thin a cloud:
Perhaps the breezes that can fly
Now below and now above,
Have snatch'd aloft the lawny shroud
Of Lady fair—that died for love.
For maids, as well as youths, have perish'd
From fruitless love too fondly cherish'd.
Nay, treacherous image! leave my mind—
For Lewti never will be kind.

Hush! my heedless feet from under
Slip the crumbling banks for ever:
Like echoes to a distant thunder,
They plunge into the gentle river.
The river-swans have heard my tread,
And startle from their reedy bed.
O beauteous Birds! methinks ye measure
Your movements to some heavenly tune!
O beauteous Birds! 't is such a pleasure
To see you move beneath the moon,
I would it were your true delight
To sleep by day and wake all night.

I know the place where Lewti lies,
When silent night has closed her eyes:
It is a breezy jasmine-bower,
The nightingale sings o'er her head:
Voice of the Night! had I the power
That leafy labyrinth to thread,
And creep, like thee, with soundless tread,
I then might view her bosom white
Heaving lovely to my sight,
As these two swans together heave
On the gently swelling wave.

Oh! that she saw me in a dream,
And dreamt that I had died for care;
All pale and wasted I would seem,
Yet fair withal, as spirits are!
I 'd die indeed, if I might see
Her bosom heave, and heave for me!
Soothe, gentle image! soothe my mind!
To-morrow Lewti may be kind.

1795.

THE PICTURE, OR THE LOVER'S RESOLUTION.

Through weeds and thorns, and matted underwood
I force my way; now climb, and now descend
O'er rocks, or bare or mossy, with wild foot
Crushing the purple whorts; while oft unseen,
Hurrying along the drifted forest-leaves,
The scared snake rustles. Onward still I toil,
I know not, ask not whither! A new joy,
Lovely as light, sudden as summer gust,
And gladsome as the first-born of the spring,
Beckons me on, or follows from behind,
Playmate, or guide! The master-passion quell'd,
I feel that I am free. With dun-red bark
The fir-trees, and the unfrequent slender oak,
Forth from this tangle wild of bush and brake
Soar up, and form a melancholy vault
High o'er me, murmuring like a distant sea.

Here Wisdom might resort, and here Remorse;
Here too the love-lorn man who, sick in soul,
And of this busy human heart aweary,
Worships the spirit of unconscious life
In tree or wild-flower.—Gentle Lunatic!
If so he might not wholly cease to be,
He would far rather not be that, he is;
But would be something, that he knows not of,
In winds or waters, or among the rocks!

But hence, fond wretch! breathe not contagion here!
No myrtle-walks are these: these are no groves
Where Love dare loiter! If in sullen mood
He should stray hither, the low stumps shall gore
His dainty feet, the briar and the thorn
Make his plumes haggard. Like a wounded bird
Easily caught, ensnare him, O ye Nymphs,
Ye Oreads chaste, ye dusky Dryades!
And you, ye Earth-winds! you that make at morn
The dew-drops quiver on the spiders' webs!
You, O ye wingless Airs! that creep between
The rigid stems of heath and bitten furze,
Within whose scanty shade, at summer-noon,
The mother-sheep hath worn a hollow bed—
Ye, that now cool her fleece with dropless damp,
Now pant and murmur with her feeding lamb.
Chase, chase him, all ye Fays, and elfin Gnomes!
With prickles sharper than his darts bemock
His little Godship, making him perforce
Creep through a thorn-bush on yon hedgehog's back.

This is my hour of triumph! I can now
With my own fancies play the merry fool,
And laugh away worse folly, being free.
Here will I seat myself, beside this old,
Hollow, and weedy oak, which ivy-twine
Clothes as with net-work: here will I couch my limbs,
Close by this river, in this silent shade,
As safe and sacred from the step of man
As an invisible world—unheard, unseen,
And list'ning only to the pebbly brook
That murmurs with a dead, yet tinkling sound;
Or to the bees, that in the neighbouring trunk
Make honey-hoards. The breeze, that visits me,
Was never Love's accomplice, never raised
The tendril ringlets from the maiden's brow,
And the blue, delicate veins above her cheek;
Ne'er play'd the wanton—never half disclosed
The maiden's snowy bosom, scattering thence
Eye-poisons for some love-distemper'd youth,
Who ne'er henceforth may see an aspen-grove

Shiver in sunshine, but his feeble heart
Shall flow away like a dissolving thing.

Sweet breeze! thou only, if I guess aright,
Liftest the feathers of the robin's breast,
That swells its little breast, so full of song,
Singing above me, on the mountain-ash.
And thou too, desert Stream! no pool of thine,
Though clear as lake in latest summer-eve,
Did e'er reflect the stately virgin's robe,
The face, the form divine, the downcast look
Contemplative! Behold! her open palm
Presses her cheek and brow! her elbow rests
On the bare branch of half-uprooted tree,
That leans towards its mirror! Who erewhile
Had from her countenance turn'd, or look'd by stealth
(For fear is true love's cruel nurse), he now
With steadfast gaze and unoffending eye,
Worships the watery idol, dreaming hopes
Delicious to the soul, but fleeting, vain,
E'en as that phantom-world on which he gazed,
But not unheeded gazed: for see, ah! see,
The sportive tyrant with her left hand plucks
The heads of tall flowers that behind her grow,
Lychnis, and willow-herb, and fox-glove bells:
And suddenly, as one that toys with time,
Scatters them on the pool! Then all the charm
Is broken—all that phantom-world so fair
Vanishes, and a thousand circlets spread,
And each mis-shapes the other. Stay awhile,
Poor youth, who scarcely darest lift up thine eyes!
The stream will soon renew its smoothness, soon
The visions will return! And lo! he stays:
And soon the fragments dim of lovely forms
Come trembling back, unite, and now once more
The pool becomes a mirror; and behold
Each wild-flower on the marge inverted there,
And there the half-uprooted tree—but where,
O where the virgin's snowy arm, that lean'd
On its bare branch? He turns, and she is gone!
Homeward she steals through many a woodland maze
Which he shall seek in vain. Ill-fated youth!
Go, day by day, and waste thy manly prime
In mad love-yearning by the vacant brook,
Till sickly thoughts bewitch thine eyes, and thou
Behold'st her shadow still abiding there,
The Naiad of the Mirror!

Not to thee,
O wild and desert Stream! belongs this tale:
Gloomy and dark art thou—the crowded firs
Spire from thy shores, and stretch across thy bed,
Making thee doleful as a cavern-well:
Save when the shy king-fishers build their nest
On thy steep banks, no loves hast thou, wild stream!

This be my chosen haunt—emancipate
From passion's dreams, a freeman, and alone,
I rise and trace its devious course. O lead,
Lead me to deeper shades and lonelier glooms.
Lo! stealing through the canopy of firs,
How fair the sunshine spots that mossy rock,
Isle of the river, whose disparted waves
Dart off asunder with an angry sound,
How soon to re-unite! And see! they meet,
Each in the other lost and found: and see
Placeless, as spirits, one soft water-sun
Throbbing within them, Heart at once and Eye!
With its soft neighbourhood of filmy clouds,
The stains and shadings of forgotten tears,
Dimness o'erswum with lustre! Such the hour
Of deep enjoyment, following love's brief feuds;
And hark, the noise of a near waterfall!
I pass forth into light—I find myself
Beneath a weeping birch (most beautiful
Of forest-trees, the Lady of the woods),
Hard by the brink of a tall weedy rock
That overbrows the cataract. How bursts
The landscape on my sight! Two crescent hills
Fold in behind each other, and so make
A circular vale, and land-lock'd, as might seem,
With brook and bridge, and grey stone cottages,
Half hid by rocks and fruit-trees. At my feet,
The whortle-berries are bedew'd with spray,
Dash'd upwards by the furious waterfall.
How solemnly the pendent ivy mass
Swings in its winnow: All the air is calm.
The smoke from cottage-chimneys, tinged with light,
Rises in columns; from this house alone,
Close by the waterfall, the column slants,
And feels its ceaseless breeze. But what is this?
That cottage, with its slanting chimney-smoke,
And close beside its porch a sleeping child,
His dear head pillow'd on a sleeping dog—
One arm between its fore-legs, and the hand
Holds loosely its small handful of wild-flowers,
Unfilleted, and of unequal lengths.
A curious picture, with a master's haste
Sketch'd on a strip of pinky-silver skin,
Peel'd from the birchen bark! Divinest maid!
Yon bark her canvas, and those purple berries
Her pencil! See, the juice is scarcely dried
On the fine skin! She has been newly here;
And lo! yon patch of heath has been her couch—
The pressure still remains! O blessed couch!
For this mayst thou flower early, and the Sun,
Slanting at eve, rest bright, and linger long
Upon thy purple bells! O Isabel!
Daughter of genius! stateliest of our maids!
More beautiful than whom Alcæus wooed,
The Lesbian woman of immortal song!
O child of genius! stately, beautiful,
And full of love to all, save only me,
And not ungentle e'en to me! My heart,
Why beats it thus? Through yonder coppice-wood
Needs must the pathway turn, that leads straightway
On to her father's house. She is alone!
The night draws on—such ways are hard to hit—
And fit it is I should restore this sketch,
Dropt unawares, no doubt. Why should I yearn
To keep the relique? 'twill but idly feed
The passion that consumes me. Let me haste!
The picture in my hand which she has left,
She cannot blame me that I follow'd her;
And I may be her guide the long wood through.

THE NIGHT-SCENE.

A DRAMATIC FRAGMENT.

SANDOVAL.

You loved the daughter of Don Manrique?

EARL HENRY.

Loved?

SANDOVAL.

Did you not say you woo'd her?

EARL HENRY.

Once I loved
Her whom I dared not woo!

SANDOVAL.

And woo'd, perchance,
One whom you loved not!

EARL HENRY.

Oh! I were most base,
Not loving Oropeza. True, I woo'd her,
Hoping to heal a deeper wound; but she
Met my advances with impassion'd pride,
That kindled love with love. And when her sire,
Who in his dream of hope already grasp'd
The golden circlet in his hand, rejected
My suit with insult, and in memory
Of ancient feuds pour'd curses on my head,
Her blessings overtook and baffled them!
But thou art stern, and with unkindly countenance
Art inly reasoning whilst thou listenest to me.

SANDOVAL.

Anxiously, Henry! reasoning anxiously.
But Oropeza—

EARL HENRY.

Blessings gather round her!
Within this wood there winds a secret passage,
Beneath the walls, which opens out at length
Into the gloomiest covert of the garden—
The night ere my departure to the army,
She, nothing trembling, led me through that gloom,
And to that covert by a silent stream,
Which, with one star reflected near its marge,
Was the sole object visible around me.
No leaflet stirr'd; the air was almost sultry;
So deep, so dark, so close, the umbrage o'er us!
No leaflet stirr'd;—yet pleasure hung upon
The gloom and stillness of the balmy night-air.
A little further on an arbour stood,
Fragrant with flowering trees—I well remember
What an uncertain glimmer in the darkness
Their snow-white blossoms made—thither she led me,
To that sweet bower! Then Oropeza trembled—
I heard her heart beat—if 't were not my own.

SANDOVAL.

A rude and scaring note, my friend!

EARL HENRY.

Oh! no!
I have small memory of aught but pleasure.
The inquietudes of fear, like lesser streams
Still flowing, still were lost in those of love:
So love grew mightier from the fear, and Nature,
Fleeing from Pain, shelter'd herself in Joy.
The stars above our heads were dim and steady,
Like eyes suffused with rapture. Life was in us:
We were all life, each atom of our frames
A living soul—I vow'd to die for her:
With the faint voice of one who, having spoken,
Relapses into blessedness, I vow'd it:
That solemn vow, a whisper scarcely heard,
A murmur breathed against a lady's ear.
Oh! there is joy above the name of pleasure,
Deep self-possession, an intense repose.

SANDOVAL (*with a sarcastic smile*).

No other than as eastern sages paint,
The God, who floats upon a lotos leaf,
Dreams for a thousand ages; then awaking,
Creates a world, and smiling at the bubble,
Relapses into bliss.

EARL HENRY.

Ah! was that bliss
Fear'd as an alien, and too vast for man?
For suddenly, impatient of its silence,
Did Oropeza, starting, grasp my forehead.
I caught her arms; the veins were swelling on them.
Through the dark bower she sent a hollow voice,
Oh! what if all betray me? what if thou?
I swore, and with an inward thought that seem'd
The purpose and the substance of my being,
I swore to her, that were she red with guilt,
I would exchange my unblench'd state with hers.—
Friend! by that winding passage, to that bower
I now will go—all objects there will teach me
Unwavering love, and singleness of heart.
Go, Sandoval! I am prepared to meet her—
Say nothing of me—I myself will seek her—
Nay, leave me, friend! I cannot bear the torment
And keen inquiry of that scanning eye—

[EARL HENRY *retires into the wood.*

SANDOVAL (*alone*).

O Henry! always strivest thou to be great
By thine own act—yet art thou never great
But by the inspiration of great passion.
The whirl-blast comes, the desert-sands rise up
And shape themselves: from Earth to Heaven they stand,
As though they were the pillars of a temple,
Built by Omnipotence in its own honour!
But the blast pauses, and their shaping spirit
Is fled: the mighty columns were but sand,
And lazy snakes trail o'er the level ruins!

TO AN UNFORTUNATE WOMAN,

WHOM THE AUTHOR HAD KNOWN IN THE DAYS OF HER INNOCENCE.

Myrtle-leaf that, ill besped,
Pinest in the gladsome ray,
Soil'd beneath the common tread,
Far from thy protecting spray!

When the Partridge o'er the sheaf
Whirr'd along the yellow vale,
Sad I saw thee, heedless leaf!
Love the dalliance of the gale.

Lightly didst thou, foolish thing!
Heave and flutter to his sighs,
While the flatterer, on his wing,
Woo'd and whisper'd thee to rise.

Gaily from thy mother-stalk
Wert thou danced and wafted high—
Soon on this unsheltered walk
Flung to fade, to rot and die.

TO AN UNFORTUNATE WOMAN AT THE THEATRE.

Maiden, that with sullen brow
Sittest behind those virgins gay,
Like a scorched and mildew'd bough,
Leafless 'mid the blooms of May!

Him who lured thee and forsook,
Oft I watch'd with angry gaze,
Fearful saw his pleading look,
Anxious heard his fervid phrase.

Soft the glances of the youth,
Soft his speech, and soft his sigh;
But no sound like simple truth,
But no true love in his eye.

Loathing thy polluted lot,
Hie thee, Maiden, hie thee hence!
Seek thy weeping Mother's cot,
With a wiser innocence.

Thou hast known deceit and folly,
Thou hast felt that vice is woe:
With a musing melancholy
Inly arm'd, go, Maiden! go.

Mother 'sage of Self-dominion,
Firm thy steps, O Melancholy!
The strongest plume in wisdom's pinion
Is the memory of past folly.

Mute the sky-lark and forlorn,
While she moults the firstling plumes,
That had skimm'd the tender corn,
Or the bean-field's odorous blooms:

Soon with renovated wing
Shall she dare a loftier flight,
Upward to the day-star spring,
And embathe in heavenly light.

LINES COMPOSED IN A CONCERT-ROOM.

Nor cold, nor stern, my soul! yet I detest
These scented Rooms, where, to a gaudy throng,
Heaves the proud Harlot her distended breast,
In intricacies of laborious song.

These feel not Music's genuine power, nor deign
To melt at Nature's passion-warbled plaint;
But when the long-breathed singer's uptrill'd strain
Bursts in a squall—they gape for wonderment.

Hark! the deep buzz of Vanity and Hate!
Scornful, yet envious, with self-torturing sneer
My lady eyes some maid of humbler state,
While the pert Captain, or the primmer Priest,
Prattles accordant scandal in her ear.

O give me, from this heartless scene released,
To hear our old musician, blind and grey
(Whom stretching from my nurse's arms I kissed),
His Scottish tunes and warlike marches play,
By moonshine, on the balmy summer-night,
The while I dance amid the tedded hay
With merry maids, whose ringlets toss in light.

Or lies the purple evening on the bay
Of the calm glossy lake, O let me hide
Unheard, unseen, behind the alder-trees,
For round their roots the fisher's boat is tied,
On whose trim seat doth Edmund stretch at ease,
And while the lazy boat sways to and fro,
Breathes in his flute sad airs, so wild and slow,
That his own cheek is wet with quiet tears.

But O, dear Anne! when midnight wind careers,
And the gust pelting on the out-house shed
Makes the cock shrilly on the rain-storm crow,
To hear thee sing some ballad full of woe,
Ballad of ship-wreck'd sailor floating dead,
Whom his own true-love buried in the sands!
Thee, gentle woman, for thy voice remeasures
Whatever tones and melancholy pleasures
The things of Nature utter; birds or trees,
Or moan of ocean-gale in weedy caves,
Or where the stiff grass 'mid the heath-plant waves,
Murmur and music thin of sudden breeze.

THE KEEPSAKE.

The tedded hay, the first fruits of the soil,
The tedded hay and corn-sheaves in one field,
Show summer gone, ere come. The foxglove tall
Sheds its loose purple bells, or in the gust,
Or when it bends beneath the up-springing lark,
Or mountain-finch alighting. And the rose
(In vain the darling of successful love)
Stands, like some boasted beauty of past years,
The thorns remaining, and the flowers all gone.
Nor can I find, amid my lonely walk
By rivulet, or spring, or wet road-side,
That blue and bright-eyed floweret of the brook,
Hope's gentle gem, the sweet Forget-me-not![1]
So will not fade the flowers which Emmeline
With delicate fingers on the snow-white silk
Has work'd (the flowers which most she knew I loved),
And, more beloved than they, her auburn hair.

In the cool morning twilight, early waked
By her full bosom's joyous restlessness,
Softly she rose, and lightly stole along,
Down the slope coppice to the woodbine bower,
Whose rich flowers, swinging in the morning breeze,
Over their dim fast-moving shadows hung,
Making a quiet image of disquiet
In the smooth, scarcely moving river-pool.
There, in that bower where first she own'd her love,
And let me kiss my own warm tear of joy
From off her glowing cheek, she sate and stretch'd

[1] One of the names (and meriting to be the only one) of the *Myosotis Scorpioides Palustris*, a flower from six to twelve inches high, with blue blossom and bright yellow eye. It has the same name over the whole Empire of Germany (*Vergissmein nicht*) and, we believe, in Denmark and Sweden.

The silk upon the frame, and work'd her name
Between the Moss-Rose and Forget-me-not—
Her own dear name, with her own auburn hair!
That forced to wander till sweet spring return,
I yet might ne'er forget her smile, her look,
Her voice (that even in her mirthful mood
Has made me wish to steal away and weep),
Nor yet the entrancement of that maiden kiss
With which she promised, that when spring return'd,
She would resign one half of that dear name,
And own thenceforth no other name but mine!

TO A LADY.

WITH FALCONER'S « SHIPWRECK.»

Ah! not by Cam or Isis, famous streams,
In arched groves, the youthful poet's choice;
Nor while half-listening, 'mid delicious dreams,
To harp and song from lady's hand and voice;

Nor yet while gazing in sublimer mood
On cliff, or cataract, in Alpine dell;
Nor in dim cave with bladdery sea-weed strew'd,
Framing wild fancies to the ocean's swell;

Our sea-bard sang this song! which still he sings,
And sings for thee, sweet friend! Hark, Pity, hark!
Now mounts, now totters on the Tempest's wings,
Now groans, and shivers, the replunging Bark!

« Cling to the shrouds!» In vain! The breakers roar—
Death shrieks! With two alone of all his clan
Forlorn the poet paced the Grecian shore,
No classic roamer, but a ship-wreck'd man!

Say then, what muse inspired these genial strains,
And lit his spirit to so bright a flame?
The elevating thought of suffered pains,
Which gentle hearts shall mourn; but chief, the name

Of Gratitude! Remembrances of Friend,
Or absent or no more! Shades of the Past,
Which Love makes Substance! Hence to thee I send,
O dear as long as life and memory last!

I send with deep regards of heart and head,
Sweet maid, for friendship form'd! this work to thee:
And thou, the while thou canst not chuse but shed
A tear for Falconer, wilt remember me.

TO A YOUNG LADY.

ON HER RECOVERY FROM A FEVER.

Why need I say, Louisa dear!
How glad I am to see you here,
A lovely convalescent;
Risen from the bed of pain and fear,
And feverish heat incessant.

The sunny Showers, the dappled Sky,
The little Birds that warble high,
Their vernal loves commencing,
Will better welcome you than I
With their sweet influencing.

Believe me, while in bed you lay,
Your danger taught us all to pray:
You made us grow devouter!
Each eye look'd up and seem'd to say,
How can we do without her?

Besides, what vex'd us worse, we knew,
They have no need of such as you
In the place where you were going:
This World has angels all too few,
And Heaven is overflowing!

SOMETHING CHILDISH, BUT VERY NATURAL.

WRITTEN IN GERMANY.

If I had but two little wings,
And were a little feathery bird,
To you I 'd fly, my dear!
But thoughts like these are idle things,
And I stay here.

But in my sleep to you I fly:
I 'm always with you in my sleep!
The world is all one's own.
But then one wakes, and where am I?
All, all alone.

Sleep stays not, though a monarch bids:
So I love to wake ere break of day:
For though my sleep be gone,
Yet, while 't is dark, one shuts one's lids,
And still dreams on.

HOME-SICK.

WRITTEN IN GERMANY.

'T is sweet to him, who all the week
Through city-crowds must push his way,
To stroll alone through fields and woods,
And hallow thus the Sabbath-Day.

And sweet it is, in summer bower,
Sincere, affectionate and gay,
One's own dear children feasting round,
To celebrate one's marriage-day.

But what is all, to his delight,
Who having long been doom'd to roam,
Throws off the bundle from his back,
Before the door of his own home?

Home-sickness is a wasting pang;
This feel I hourly more and more:
There 's Healing only in thy wings,
Thou Breeze that playest on Albion's shore!

ANSWER TO A CHILD'S QUESTION.

Do you ask what the birds say? The Sparrow, the Dove,
The Linnet and Thrush say, «I love and I love!»
In the winter they 're silent—the wind is so strong;
What it says, I don't know, but it sings a loud song.
But green leaves, and blossoms, and sunny warm weather,
And singing, and loving—all come back together.

But the Lark is so brimful of gladness and love,
The green fields below him, the blue sky above,
That he sings, and he sings; and for ever sings he—
"I love my Love, and my Love loves me!"

THE VISIONARY HOPE.

Sad lot, to have no Hope! Though lowly kneeling
He fain would frame a prayer within his breast,
Would fain entreat for some sweet breath of healing,
That his sick body might have ease and rest;
He strove in vain! the dull sighs from his chest
Against his will the stifling load revealing,
Though Nature forced; though like some captive guest,
Some royal prisoner at his conqueror's feast,
An alien's restless mood but half concealing,
The sternness on his gentle brow confess'd,
Sickness within and miserable feeling:
Though obscure pangs made curses of his dreams,
And dreaded sleep, each night repell'd in vain,
Each night was scatter'd by its own loud screams:
Yet never could his heart command, though fain,
One deep full wish to be no more in pain.

That Hope, which was his inward bliss and boast,
Which waned and died, yet ever near him stood,
Though changed in nature, wander where he would—
For Love's Despair is but Hope's pining Ghost!
For this one hope he makes his hourly moan,
He wishes and *can* wish for this alone!
Pierced, as with light from Heaven, before its gleams
(So the love-stricken visionary deems)
Disease would vanish, like a summer shower,
Whose dews fling sunshine from the noon-tide bower!
Or let it stay! yet this one Hope should give
Such strength that he would bless his pains and live.

THE HAPPY HUSBAND.

A FRAGMENT.

Oft, oft methinks, the while with Thee
I breathe, as from the heart, thy dear
And dedicated name, I hear
A promise and a mystery,
A pledge of more than passing life,
Yea, in that very name of Wife!

A pulse of love, that ne'er can sleep!
A feeling that upbraids the heart
With happiness beyond desert,
That gladness half requests to weep!
Nor bless I not the keener sense
And unalarming turbulence

Of transient joys, that ask no sting
From jealous fears, or coy denying;
But born beneath Love's brooding wing,
And into tenderness soon dying,
Wheel out their giddy moment, then
Resign the soul to love again.

A more precipitated vein
Of notes, that eddy in the flow
Of smoothest song, they come, they go,
And leave their sweeter understrain
Its own sweet self—a love of Thee
That seems, yet cannot greater be!

RECOLLECTIONS OF LOVE.

How warm this woodland wild Recess!
Love surely hath been breathing here.
And this sweet bed of heath, my dear!
Swells up, then sinks with fain caress,
As if to have you yet more near.

Eight springs have flown, since last I lay
On sea-ward Quantock's heathy hills,
Where quiet sounds from hidden rills
Float here and there, like things astray,
And high o'er head the sky-lark shrills.

No voice as yet had made the air
Be music with your name; yet why
That asking look? that yearning sigh?
That sense of promise every where?
Beloved! flew your spirit by?

As when a mother doth explore
The rose-mark on her long-lost child,
I met, I loved you, maiden mild!
As whom I long had loved before—
So deeply, had I been beguiled.

You stood before me like a thought,
A dream remember'd in a dream.
But when those meek eyes first did seem
To tell me, Love within you wrought—
O Greta, dear domestic stream!

Has not, since then, Love's prompture deep
Has not Love's whisper evermore,
Been ceaseless, as thy gentle roar?
Sole voice, when other voices sleep,
Dear under-song in Clamour's hour.

ON REVISITING THE SEA-SHORE, AFTER LONG ABSENCE,

UNDER STRONG MEDICAL RECOMMENDATION NOT TO BATHE.

God be with thee, gladsome Ocean!
How gladly greet I thee once more!
Ships and waves, and ceaseless motion,
And men rejoicing on thy shore.

Dissuading spake the mild Physician,
"Those briny waves for thee are Death!"
But my soul fulfill'd her mission,
And lo! I breathe untroubled breath!

Fashion's pining sons and daughters,
That seek the crowd they seem to fly,
Trembling they approach thy waters;
And what cares Nature, if they die?

Me a thousand hopes and pleasures,
A thousand recollections bland,
Thoughts sublime, and stately measures,
Revisit on thy echoing strand:

Dreams (the Soul herself forsaking),
Tearful raptures, boyish mirth;
Silent adorations, making
A blessed shadow of this Earth!

O ye hopes, that stir within me,
Health comes with you from above!
God is with me, God is in me!
I cannot die, if Life be Love.

THE COMPOSITION OF A KISS.

Cupid, if storying legends [1] tell aright,
Once framed a rich elixir of delight.
A chalice o'er love-kindled flames he fix'd,
And in it nectar and ambrosia mix'd:
With these the magic dews, which evening brings,
Brush'd from the Idalian star by faery wings:
Each tender pledge of sacred faith he join'd,
Each gentler pleasure of the unspotted mind—
Day-dreams, whose tints with sportive brightness glow
And Hope, the blameless parasite of woe.
The eyeless Chemist heard the process rise,
The steamy chalice bubbled up in sighs;
Sweet sounds transpired, as when th' enamour'd dove
Pours the soft murm'ring of responsive love.
The finish'd work might Envy vainly blame,
And « Kisses » was the precious compound's name.
With half the god his Cyprian mother blest,
And breathed on Sara's lovelier lips the rest.

III. MEDITATIVE POEMS,

IN BLANK VERSE.

Yea, he deserves to find himself deceived,
Who seeks a heart in the unthinking Man.
Like shadows on a stream, the forms of life
Impress their characters on the smooth forehead:
Nought sinks into the Bosom's silent depth.
Quick sensibility of Pain and Pleasure
Moves the light fluids lightly; but no soul
Warmeth the inner frame.

Schiller.

HYMN BEFORE SUN-RISE, IN THE VALE OF CHAMOUNY.

Besides the Rivers Arve and Arveiron, which have their sources in the foot of Mont Blanc, five conspicuous torrents rush down its sides; and within a few paces of the Glaciers, the Gentiana Major grows in immense numbers, with its « flowers of loveliest blue.»

Hast thou a charm to stay the Morning-Star
In his steep course? So long he seems to pause

[1] Effinxit quondam blandum meditata laborem
Basia lascivâ Cypria Diva manâ.
Ambrosiæ succos occultâ temperat arte,
Fragransque infuso nectare tingit opus.
Sufficit et partem mellis, quod subdolus olim
Non impune favis surripuisset Amor.
Decussos violæ foliis admiscet odores
Et spolia æstivis plurima rapta rosis.
Addit et illecebras et mille et mille lepores,
Et quot Acidalius gandia Cestus habet.
Ex his composuit Dea basia; et omnia libans
Invenias nitidæ sparsa per ora Cloës.
Carm. *Quad. Vol.* II.

On thy bald awful head, O sovran Blanc!
The Arve and Arveiron at thy base
Rave ceaselessly; but thou, most awful form!
Risest from forth thy silent Sea of Pines,
How silently! Around thee and above
Deep is the air and dark, substantial, black,
An ebon mass: methinks thou piercest it,
As with a wedge! But when I look again,
It is thine own calm home, thy crystal shrine,
Thy habitation from eternity!
O dread and silent Mount! I gazed upon thee,
Till thou, still present to the bodily sense,
Didst vanish from my thought: entranced in prayer
I worshipp'd the Invisible alone.

Yet, like some sweet beguiling melody,
So sweet, we know not we are listening to it,
Thou, the meanwhile, wast blending with my Thought,
Yea with my Life and Life's own secret Joy:
Till the dilating Soul, enrapt, transfused,
Into the mighty vision passing—there
As in her natural form, swell'd vast to Heaven!

Awake, my soul! not only passive praise
Thou owest! not alone these swelling tears,
Mute thanks and secret ecstacy! Awake,
Voice of sweet song! Awake, my heart, awake!
Green vales and icy cliffs, all join my Hymn.

Thou first and chief, sole Sovereign of the Vale!
O struggling with the darkness all the night,
And visited all night by troops of stars,
Or when they climb the sky or when they sink:
Companion of the Morning-Star at dawn,
Thyself earth's rosy star, and of the dawn
Co-herald: wake, O wake, and utter praise!
Who sank thy sunless pillars deep in earth?
Who fill'd thy countenance with rosy light?
Who made thee Parent of perpetual streams?

And you, ye five wild torrents fiercely glad!
Who call'd you forth from night and utter death,
From dark and icy caverns call'd you forth,
Down those precipitous, black, jagged rocks,
For ever shatter'd and the same for ever?
Who gave you your invulnerable life,
Your strength, your speed, your fury, and your joy,
Unceasing thunder and eternal foam?
And who commanded (and the silence came),
Here let the billows stiffen, and have rest?

Ye Ice-falls! ye that from the mountain's brow
Adown enormous ravines slope amain—
Torrents, methinks, that heard a mighty Voice,
And stopp'd at once amid their maddest plunge!
Motionless torrents! silent cataracts!
Who made you glorious as the Gates of Heaven
Beneath the keen full Moon? Who bade the Sun
Clothe you with rainbows? Who, with living flowers
Of loveliest blue, spread garlands at your feet?—
God! let the torrents, like a shout of nations
Answer! and let the ice-plains echo, God!
God! sing ye meadow-streams with gladsome voice!
Ye pine-groves, with your soft and soul-like sounds!
And they too have a voice, yon piles of snow,
And in their perilous fall shall thunder, God!

Ye living flowers that skirt the eternal frost!
Ye wild goats sporting round the eagle's nest!
Ye eagles, play-mates of the mountain-storm!
Ye lightnings, the dread arrows of the clouds!
Ye signs and wonders of the element!
Utter forth God, and fill the hills with praise!

Thou too, hoar Mount! with thy sky-pointing peaks,
Oft from whose feet the Avalanche, unheard,
Shoots downward, glittering through the pure serene
Into the depth of clouds, that veil thy breast—
Thou too again, stupendous Mountain! thou
That as I raise my head, awhile bow'd low
In adoration, upward from thy base
Slow travelling with dim eyes suffused with tears,
Solemnly seemest, like a vapoury cloud,
To rise before me—Rise, O ever rise,
Rise like a cloud of incense, from the earth!
Thou kingly Spirit throned among the hills,
Thou dread Ambassador from Earth to Heaven,
Great Hierarch! tell thou the silent sky,
And tell the Stars, and tell yon rising sun,
Earth, with her thousand voices, praises God.

LINES

WRITTEN IN THE ALBUM AT ELBINGERODE, IN THE HARTZ FOREST.

I stood on Brocken's [1] sovran height, and saw
Woods crowding upon woods, hills over hills,
A surging scene, and only limited
By the blue distance. Heavily my way
Downward I dragg'd through fir-groves evermore,
Where bright green moss heaves in sepulchral forms
Speckled with sunshine; and, but seldom heard,
The sweet bird's song became a hollow sound;
And the breeze, murmuring indivisibly,
Preserved its solemn murmur most distinct
From many a note of many a waterfall,
And the brook's chatter; 'mid whose islet stones
The dingy kidling with its tinkling bell
Leap'd frolicsome, or old romantic goat
Sat, his white beard slow waving. I moved on
In low and languid mood: [2] for I had found
That outward forms, the loftiest, still receive
Their finer influence from the Life within:
Fair ciphers else: fair, but of import vague
Or unconcerning, where the Heart not finds
History or prophecy of Friend, or Child,
Or gentle Maid, our first and early love,
Or Father, of that venerable name
Of our adored Country! O thou Queen,
Thou delegated Deity of Earth,
O dear, dear England! how my longing eye
Turn'd westward, shaping in the steady clouds
Thy sands and high white cliffs!

[1] The highest mountain in the Hartz, and indeed in North Germany.

[2] ——————— When I have gazed
From some high eminence on goodly vales,
And cots and villages embower'd below,
The thought would rise that all to me was strange
Amid the scenes so fair, nor one small spot
Where my tired mind might rest, and call it home.
Southey's *Hymn to the Penates.*

My native land!
Fill'd with the thought of thee this heart was proud,
Yea, mine eye swam with tears: that all the view
From sovran Brocken, woods and woody hills,
Floated away, like a departing dream,
Feeble and dim! Stranger, these impulses
Blame thou not lightly; nor will I profane,
With hasty judgment or injurious doubt,
That man's sublimer spirit, who can feel
That God is everywhere! the God who framed
Mankind to be one mighty Family,
Himself our Father, and the World our Home.

ON OBSERVING A BLOSSOM ON THE FIRST OF FEBRUARY, 1796.

Sweet Flower! that peeping from thy russet stem
Unfoldest timidly (for in strange sort
This dark, frieze-coated, hoarse, teeth-chattering month
Hath borrow'd Zephyr's voice, and gazed upon thee
With blue voluptuous eye), alas, poor Flower!
These are but flatteries of the faithless year.
Perchance, escaped its unknown polar cave,
E'en now the keen North-East is on its way.
Flower that must perish! shall I liken thee
To some sweet girl of too too rapid growth,
Nipp'd by Consumption 'mid untimely charms?
Or to Bristowa's Bard,[1] the wondrous boy!
An Amaranth, which earth scarce seem'd to own,
Till Disappointment came, and pelting wrong
Beat it to earth? or with indignant grief
Shall I compare thee to poor Poland's Hope,
Bright flower of Hope kill'd in the opening bud?
Farewell, sweet blossom! better fate be thine,
And mock my boding! Dim similitudes
Weaving in moral strains, I've stolen one hour
From anxious Self, Life's cruel Task-Master!
And the warm wooings of this sunny day
Tremble along my frame and harmonize
The attemper'd organ, that even saddest thoughts
Mix with some sweet sensations, like harsh tunes
Play'd deftly on a soft-toned instrument.

THE EOLIAN HARP.

COMPOSED AT CLEVEDON, SOMERSETSHIRE.

My pensive Sara! thy soft cheek reclined
Thus on mine arm, most soothing sweet it is
To sit beside our cot, our cot o'ergrown
With white-flower'd Jasmin, and the broad-leaved Myrtle,
(Meet emblems they of Innocence and Love!)
And watch the clouds, that late were rich with light,
Slow saddening round, and mark the star of eve
Serenely brilliant (such should wisdom be)
Shine opposite! How exquisite the scents
Snatch'd from yon bean-field! and the world so hush'd!
The stilly murmur of the distant Sea
Tells us of Silence.

And that simplest Lute,
Placed length-ways in the clasping casement, hark!
How by the desultory breeze caress'd,
Like some coy maid half yielding to her lover,

[1] Chatterton.

It pours such sweet upbraiding, as must needs
Tempt to repeat the wrong! And now, its strings
Boldlier swept, the long sequacious notes
Over delicious surges sink and rise,
Such a soft floating witchery of sound
As twilight Elfins make, when they at eve
Voyage on gentle gales from Fairy-Land,
Where Melodies round honey-dropping flowers,
Footless and wild, like birds of Paradise,
Nor pause, nor perch, hovering on untamed wing!
O the one life within us and abroad,
Which meets all motion and becomes its soul,
A light in sound, a sound-like power in light,
Rhythm in all thought, and joyance every where—
Methinks, it should have been impossible
Not to love all things in a world so fill'd;
Where the breeze warbles, and the mute still air
Is Music slumbering on her instrument.

And thus, my love! as on the midway slope
Of yonder hill I stretch my limbs at noon,
Whilst through my half-closed eye-lids I behold
The sunbeams dance, like diamonds, on the main,
And tranquil muse upon tranquillity;
Full many a thought uncall'd and undetain'd,
And many idle flitting phantasies,
Traverse my indolent and passive brain,
As wild and various as the random gales
That swell and flutter on this subject lute!

And what if all of animated nature
Be but organic harps diversely framed,
That tremble into thought, as o'er them sweeps,
Plastic and vast, one intellectual breeze,
At once the Soul of each, and God of All?

But thy more serious eye a mild reproof
Darts, O beloved woman! nor such thoughts
Dim and unhallow'd dost thou not reject,
And biddest me walk humbly with my God.
Meek daughter in the family of Christ!
Well hast thou said and holily dispraised
These shapings of the unregenerate mind;
Bubbles that glitter as they rise and break
On vain Philosophy's aye-babbling spring.
For never guiltless may I speak of him,
The Incomprehensible! save when with awe
I praise him, and with Faith that inly feels;
Who with his saving mercies healed me,
A sinful and most miserable Man,
Wilder'd and dark, and gave me to possess
Peace, and this Cot, and thee, heart-honour'd Maid!

REFLECTIONS ON HAVING LEFT A PLACE OF RETIREMENT.

Sermoni propriora.—Hor.

Low was our pretty Cot: our tallest rose
Peep'd at the chamber-window. We could hear
At silent noon, and eve, and early morn,
The Sea's faint murmur. In the open air
Our myrtles blossom'd; and across the Porch
Thick jasmins twined: the little landscape round
Was green and woody, and refresh'd the eye.
It was a spot which you might aptly call
The Valley of Seclusion! Once I saw
(Hallowing his Sabbath-day by quietness)
A wealthy son of commerce saunter by,
Bristowa's citizen: methought, it calm'd
His thirst of idle gold, and made him muse
With wiser feelings: for he paused, and look'd
With a pleased sadness, and gazed all around,
Then eyed our cottage, and gazed round again,
And sigh'd, and said, it was a blessed place.
And we *were* bless'd. Oft with patient ear
Long-listening to the viewless sky-lark's note
(Viewless or haply for a moment seen
Gleaming on sunny wings), in whisper'd tones
I 've said to my beloved, « Such, sweet girl!
The inobtrusive song of Happiness,
Unearthly minstrelsy! then only heard
When the soul seeks to hear; when all is hush'd,
And the Heart listens!»

But the time, when first
From that low dell, steep up the stony Mount
I climb'd with perilous toil and reach'd the top,
Oh! what a goodly scene! *Here* the bleak Mount,
The bare bleak Mountain speckled thin with sheep;
Grey clouds, that shadowing spot the sunny fields;
And River, now with bushy rocks o'erbrow'd,
Now winding bright and full, with naked banks;
And Seats, and Lawns, the Abbey and the Wood,
And Cots, and Hamlets, and faint City-spire;
The Channel *there*, the Islands and white Sails,
Dim Coasts, and cloud-like Hills, and shoreless Ocean—
It seem'd like Omnipresence! God, methought,
Had built him there a Temple: the whole World
Seem'd imaged in its vast circumference,
No *wish* profaned my overwhelmed heart.
Blest hour! It was a luxury,—to be!

Ah! quiet dell; dear cot, and mount sublime!
I was constrain'd to quit you. Was it right,
While my unnumber'd brethren toil'd and bled,
That I should dream away the entrusted hours
On rose-leaf beds, pampering the coward heart
With feelings all too delicate for use?
Sweet is the tear that from some Howard's eye
Drops on the cheek of One he lifts from Earth:
And He that works me good with unmoved face,
Does it but half: he chills me while he aids,
My Benefactor, not my Brother Man!
Yet even this, this cold beneficence
Praise, praise it, O my Soul! oft as thou scann'st
The Sluggard Pity's vision-weaving tribe!
Who sigh for wretchedness, yet shun the wretched,
Nursing in some delicious solitude
Their slothful loves and dainty Sympathies!
I therefore go, and join head, heart, and hand,
Active and firm, to fight the bloodless fight
Of Science, Freedom, and the Truth in Christ.

Yet oft, when after honourable toil
Rests the tired mind, and waking loves to dream,
My spirit shall revisit thee, dear Cot!
Thy jasmin and thy window-peeping rose,
And myrtles fearless of the mild sea-air.
And I shall sigh fond wishes—sweet Abode!

Ah!—had none greater! And that all had such!
It might be so—but the time is not yet.
Speed it, O Father! Let thy Kingdom come!

TO THE REV. GEORGE COLERIDGE OF OTTERY ST MARY, DEVON.

WITH SOME POEMS.

Notus in fratres animi paterni.
Hor. Carm. lib. i. 2.

A BLESSED lot hath he, who having pass'd
His youth and early manhood in the stir
And turmoil of the world, retreats at length,
With cares that move, not agitate the heart,
To the same dwelling where his father dwelt;
And haply views his tottering little ones
Embrace those aged knees and climb that lap,
On which first kneeling his own infancy
Lisp'd its brief prayer. Such, O my earliest Friend!
Thy lot, and such thy brothers too enjoy.
At distance did ye climb Life's upland road,
Yet cheer'd and cheering: now fraternal love
Hath drawn you to one centre. Be your days
Holy, and blest and blessing may ye live!

To me th' Eternal Wisdom hath dispensed
A different fortune and more different mind—
Me from the spot where first I sprang to light
Too soon transplanted, ere my soul had fix'd
Its first domestic loves; and hence through life
Chasing chance-started Friendships. A brief while
Some have preserved me from Life's pelting ills;
But, like a tree with leaves of feeble stem,
If the clouds lasted, and a sudden breeze
Ruffled the boughs, they on my head at once
Dropp'd the collected shower; and some most false,
False and fair foliaged as the Manchineel,
Have tempted me to slumber in their shade
E'en 'mid the storm; then breathing subtlest damps,
Mix'd their own venom with the rain from Heaven,
That I woke poison'd! But, all praise to Him
Who gives us all things, more have yielded me
Permanent shelter; and beside one Friend,
Beneath th' impervious covert of one Oak,
I 've raised a lowly shed, and know the names
Of Husband and of Father; nor unhearing
Of that divine and nightly-whispering Voice,
Which from my childhood to maturer years
Spake to me of predestinated wreaths,
Bright with unfading colours!

Yet at times
My soul is sad, that I have roam'd through life
Still most a stranger, most with naked heart
At mine own home and birth-place: chiefly then,
When I remember thee, my earliest Friend!
Thee, who didst watch my boyhood and my youth;
Didst trace my wanderings with a Father's eye;
And boding evil, yet still hoping good,
Rebuked each fault, and over all my woes
Sorrow'd in silence! He who counts alone
The beatings of the solitary heart,
That Being knows, how I have loved thee ever,
Loved as a brother, as a son revered thee!
Oh! 't is to me an ever new delight,
To talk of thee and thine: or when the blast
Of the shrill winter, rattling our rude sash,
Endears the cleanly hearth and social bowl;
Or when as now, on some delicious eve,
We, in our sweet sequester'd orchard-plot,
Sit on the tree crooked earth-ward; whose old boughs,
That hang above us in an arborous roof,
Stirr'd by the faint gale of departing May,
Send their loose blossoms slanting o'er our heads!

Nor dost not *thou* sometimes recall those hours,
When with the joy of hope thou gavest thine ear
To my wild firstling-lays. Since then my song
Hath sounded deeper notes, such as beseem
Or that sad wisdom folly leaves behind,
Or such as, tuned to these tumultuous times,
Cope with the tempest's swell!

These various strains,
Which I have framed in many a various mood,
Accept, my Brother! and (for some perchance
Will strike discordant on thy milder mind)
If aught of Error or intemperate Truth
Should meet thine ear, think thou that riper age
Will calm it down, and let thy love forgive it!

INSCRIPTION FOR A FOUNTAIN ON A HEATH.

THIS Sycamore, oft musical with bees,—
Such tents the Patriarchs loved! O long unharm'd
May all its aged boughs o'er-canopy
The small round basin, which this jutting stone
Keeps pure from falling leaves! Long may the Spring,
Quietly as a sleeping infant's breath,
Send up cold waters to the traveller
With soft and even pulse! Nor ever cease
Yon tiny cone of sand its soundless dance,
Which at the bottom, like a fairy's page,
As merry and no taller, dances still,
Nor wrinkles the smooth surface of the Fount.
Here twilight is and coolness: here is moss,
A soft seat, and a deep and ample shade.
Thou mayst toil far and find no second tree.
Drink, Pilgrim, here! Here rest! and if thy heart
Be innocent, here too shalt thou refresh
Thy spirit, listening to some gentle sound,
Or passing gale or hum of murmuring bees!

A TOMBLESS EPITAPH.

'T is true, Idoloclastes Satyrane!
(So call him, for so mingling blame with praise,
And smiles with anxious looks, his earliest friends,
Masking his birth-name, wont to character
His wild-wood fancy and impetuous zeal)
'T is true that, passionate for ancient truths,
And honouring with religious love the Great
Of elder times, he hated to excess,
With an unquiet and intolerant scorn,
The hollow puppets of a hollow age,
Ever idolatrous, and changing ever
Its worthless Idols! Learning, Power, and Time,
(Too much of all) thus wasting in vain war

Of fervid colloquy. Sickness, 't is true,
Whole years of weary days, besieged him close,
Even to the gates and inlets of his life!
But it is true, no less, that strenuous, firm,
And with a natural gladness, he maintain'd
The citadel unconquer'd, and in joy
Was strong to follow the delightful Muse.
For not a hidden Path, that to the Shades
Of the beloved Parnassian forest leads,
Lurk'd undiscover'd by him; not a rill
There issues from the fount of Hippocrene,
But he had traced it upward to its source,
Through open glade, dark glen, and secret dell,
Knew the gay wild flowers on its banks, and cull'd
Its med'cinable herbs. Yea, oft alone,
Piercing the long-neglected holy cave,
The haunt obscure of old Philosophy,
He bade with lifted torch its starry walls
Sparkle as erst they sparkled to the flame
Of odorous lamps tended by Saint and Sage.
O framed for calmer times and nobler hearts!
O studious Poet, eloquent for truth!
Philosopher! contemning wealth and death,
Yet docile, childlike, full of life and love!
Here, rather than on monumental stone,
This record of thy worth thy Friend inscribes,
Thoughtful, with quiet tears upon his cheek.

THIS LIME-TREE BOWER MY PRISON.

In the June of 1797, some long-expected Friends paid a visit to the Author's Cottage; and on the morning of their arrival, he met with an accident, which disabled him from walking during the whole time of their stay. One Evening, when they had left him for a few hours, he composed the following lines in the Garden Bower.

Well, they are gone, and here must I remain,
This Lime-tree bower my prison! I have lost
Beauties and feelings, such as would have been
Most sweet to my remembrance, even when age
Had dimm'd mine eyes to blindness! They, meanwhile,
Friends, whom I never more may meet again,
On springy heath, along the hill-top edge,
Wander in gladness, and wind down, perchance,
To that still roaring dell, of which I told:
The roaring dell, o'erwooded, narrow, deep,
And only speckled by the mid-day sun;
Where its slim trunk the Ash from rock to rock
Flings arching like a bridge;—that branchless Ash,
Unsunn'd and damp, whose few poor yellow leaves
Ne'er tremble in the gale, yet tremble still,
Fann'd by the water-fall! and there my friends
Behold the dark-green file of long lank weeds,[1]
That all at once (a most fantastic sight!)
Still nod and drip beneath the dripping edge
Of the blue clay-stone.

Now, my Friends emerge
Beneath the wide wide Heaven—and view again
The many-steepled tract magnificent
Of hilly fields and meadows, and the sea,
With some fair bark, perhaps, whose sails light up
The slip of smooth clear blue betwixt two isles
Of purple shadow! Yes, they wander on
In gladness all; but thou, methinks, most glad,
My gentle-hearted Charles! for thou hast pined
And hunger'd after Nature, many a year,
In the great city pent, winning thy way
With sad yet patient soul, through evil and pain
And strange calamity! Ah! slowly sink
Behind the western ridge, thou glorious Sun!
Shine in the slant beams of the sinking orb,
Ye purple heath-flowers! richlier burn, ye clouds!
Live in the yellow light, ye distant groves!
And kindle, thou blue Ocean! So my Friend,
Struck with deep joy, may stand, as I have stood,
Silent with swimming sense; yea, gazing round
On the wide landscape, gaze till all doth seem
Less gross than bodily; and of such hues
As veil the Almighty Spirit, when yet he makes
Spirits perceive his presence.

A delight
Comes sudden on my heart, and I am glad
As I myself were there! Nor in this bower,
This little lime-tree bower, have I not mark'd
Much that has soothed me. Pale beneath the blaze
Hung the transparent foliage; and I watch'd
Some broad and sunny leaf, and loved to see
The shadow of the leaf and stem above
Dappling its sunshine! And that Walnut-tree
Was richly tinged, and a deep radiance lay
Full on the ancient Ivy, which usurps
Those fronting elms, and now, with blackest mass,
Makes their dark branches gleam a lighter hue
Through the late twilight: and though now the Bat
Wheels silent by, and not a Swallow twitters,
Yet still the solitary humble Bee
Sings in the bean-flower! Henceforth I shall know
That Nature ne'er deserts the wise and pure:
No plot so narrow, be but Nature there,
No waste so vacant, but may well employ
Each faculty of sense, and keep the heart
Awake to Love and Beauty! and sometimes
'T is well to be bereft of promised good,
That we may lift the soul, and contemplate
With lively joy the joys we cannot share.
My gentle-hearted Charles! when the last Rook
Beat its straight path along the dusky air
Homewards, I blest it! deeming its black wing
(Now a dim speck, now vanishing in light)
Had cross'd the mighty Orb's dilated glory,
While thou stood'st gazing; or when all was still,
Flew creaking[1] o'er thy head, and had a charm
For thee, my gentle-hearted Charles, to whom
No sound is dissonant which tells of Life.

TO A FRIEND

WHO HAD DECLARED HIS INTENTION OF WRITING NO MORE POETRY.

Dear Charles! whilst yet thou wert a babe, I ween
That Genius plunged thee in that wizard fount

[1] The Asplenium Scolopendrium, called in some countries the Adder's Tongue, in others the Hart's Tongue; but Withering gives the Adder's Tongue as the trivial name of the Ophioglossum only.

[1] Some months after I had written this line, it gave me pleasure to observe that Bartram had observed the same circumstance of the Savanna Crane. "When these Birds move their wings in flight, their strokes are slow, moderate and regular; and even when at a

Hight Castalie: and (suretics of thy faith)
That Pity and Simplicity stood by,
And promised for thee, that thou shouldst renounce
The world's low cares and lying vanities,
Stedfast and rooted in the heavenly Muse,
And wash'd and sanctificd to Poesy.
Yes—thou wert plunged, but with forgetful hand
Held, as by Thetis erst her warrior Son:
And with those recreant unbaptized heels
Thou 'rt flying from thy bounden ministeries—
So sore it seems and burthensome a task
To weave unwithering flowers! But take thou heed:
For thou art vulnerable, wild-eyed Boy,
And I have arrows[1] mystically dipp'd,
Such as may stop thy speed. Is thy Burns dead?
And shall he die unwept, and sink to Earth
« Without the meed of one melodious tear?»
Thy Burns, and Nature's own beloved Bard,
Who to the « Illustrious[2] of his native land
« So properly did look for patronage.»
Ghost of Mæcenas! hide thy blushing face!
They snatch'd him from the Sickle and the Plough—
To gauge Ale-Firkins.

Oh! for shame return!
On a bleak rock, midway the Aonian Mount,
There stands a lone and melancholy tree,
Whose aged branches in the midnight blast
Make solemn music: pluck its darkest bough,
Ere yet the unwholesome night-dew be exhaled,
And weeping wreath it round thy Poet's tomb.
Then in the outskirts, where pollutions grow,
Pick the rank henbane and the dusky flowers
Of night-shade, or its red and tempting fruit.
These with stopp'd nostril and glove-guarded hand
Knit in nice intertexture, so to twine
The illustrious brow of Scotch Nobility.

1796.

TO A GENTLEMAN.

COMPOSED ON THE NIGHT AFTER HIS RECITATION OF A POEM ON THE GROWTH OF AN INDIVIDUAL MIND.

Friend of the Wise! and Teacher of the Good!
Into my heart have I received that lay
More than historic, that prophetic lay,
Wherein (high theme by thee first sung aright)
Of the foundations and the building up
Of a Human Spirit thou hast dared to tell
What may be told, to the understanding mind
Revealable; and what within the mind,
By vital breathings secret as the soul
Of vernal growth, oft quickens in the heart
Thoughts all too deep for words!—

Theme hard as high!
Of smiles spontaneous, and mysterious fears
(The first-born they of Reason and twin-birth),
Of tides obedient to external force,
And currents self-determined, as might seem,
Or by some inner Power; of moments awful,
Now in thy inner life, and now abroad,
When Power stream'd from thee, and thy soul received
The light reflected, as a light bestow'd—
Of Fancies fair, and milder hours of youth,
Hyblean murmurs of poetic thought
Industrious in its joy, in Vales and Glens
Native or outland, Lakes and famous Hills!
Or on the lonely High-road, when the Stars
Were rising; or by secret Mountain-streams,
The Guides and the Companions of thy way!

Of more than Fancy, of the Social Sense
Distending wide, and Man beloved as Man,
Where France in all her towns lay vibrating
Like some becalmed bark beneath the burst
Of Heaven's immediate thunder, when no cloud
Is visible, or shadow on the Main.
For thou wert there, thine own brows garlanded,
Amid the tremor of a realm aglow,
Amid a mighty nation jubilant,
When from the general heart of human kind
Hope sprang forth like a full-born Deity!
——Of that dear Hope afflicted and struck down,
So summon'd homeward, thenceforth calm and sure,
From the dread watch-tower of man's absolute Self,
With light unwaning on her eyes, to look
Far on—herself a glory to behold,
The Angel of the vision! Then (last strain)
Of Duty, chosen laws controlling choice,
Action and Joy!—An orphic song indeed,
A song divine of high and passionate thoughts,
To their own music chaunted!

O great Bard!
Ere yet that last strain dying awed the air,
With stedfast eye I view'd thee in the choir
Of ever-enduring men. The truly Great
Have all one age, and from one visible space
Shed influence! They, both in power and act,
Are permanent, and Time is not with *them*,
Save as it worketh *for* them, they *in* it.
Nor less a sacred roll, than those of old,
And to be placed, as they, with gradual fame
Among the archives of mankind, thy work
Makes audible a linked lay of Truth,
Of Truth profound a sweet continuous lay,
Not learnt, but native, her own natural notes!
Ah! as I listen'd with a heart forlorn,
The pulses of my being beat anew:
And even as life returns upon the drown'd,
Life's joy rekindling roused a throng of pains—
Keen Pangs of Love, awakening as a babe
Turbulent, with an outcry in the heart;
And Fears self-will'd, that shunn'd the eye of Hope;
And Hope that scarce would know itself from Fear;
Sense of past Youth, and Manhood come in vain,
And Genius given, and knowledge won in vain;
And all which I had cull'd in wood-walks wild,
And all which patient toil had rear'd, and all,
Commune with *thee* had open'd out—but flowers
Strew'd on my corse, and borne upon my bier,
In the same coffin, for the self-same grave!

That way no more! and ill beseems it me,
Who came a welcomer in herald's guise,

considerable distance or high above us, we plainly hear the quill-feathers; their shafts and webs upon one another creak as the joints or working of a vessel in a tempestuous sea.»

[1] Vide Pind. Olymp. iii. l. 156.

[2] Verbatim from Burns's dedication of his Poems to the Nobility and Gentry of the Caledonian Hunt.

Singing of Glory, and Futurity,
To wander back on such unhealthful road,
Plucking the poisons of self-harm! And ill
Such intertwine beseems triumphal wreaths
Strew'd before *thy* advancing!

Nor do thou,
Sage Bard! impair the memory of that hour
Of thy communion with my nobler mind
By Pity or Grief, already felt too long!
Nor let my words import more blame than needs.
The tumult rose and ceased: for Peace is nigh
Where Wisdom's voice has found a listening heart.
Amid the howl of more than wintry storms,
The Halcyon hears the voice of vernal hours
Already on the wing.

Eve following eve,
Dear tranquil time, when the sweet sense of Home
Is sweetest! moments for their own sake hail'd
And more desired, more precious for thy song,
In silence listening, like a devout child,
My soul lay passive, by thy various strain
Driven as in surges now beneath the stars,
With momentary Stars of my own birth,
Fair constellated Foam,[1] still darting off
Into the darkness; now a tranquil sea,
Outspread and bright, yet swelling to the Moon.

And when—O Friend! my comforter and guide!
Strong in thyself, and powerful to give strength!—
Thy long sustained song finally closed,
And thy deep voice had ceased—yet thou thyself
Wert still before my eyes, and round us both
That happy vision of beloved faces—
Scarce conscious, and yet conscious of its close
I sate, my being blended in one thought
(Thought was it? or Aspiration? or Resolve?)
Absorb'd, yet hanging still upon the sound—
And when I rose, I found myself in prayer.

THE NIGHTINGALE;

A CONVERSATION POEM;

WRITTEN IN APRIL, 1798.

No cloud, no relique of the sunken day
Distinguishes the West, no long thin slip
Of sullen light, no obscure trembling hues.
Come, we will rest on this old mossy bridge!
You see the glimmer of the stream beneath,
But hear no murmuring: it flows silently,
O'er its soft bed of verdure. All is still,
A balmy night! and though the stars be dim,
Yet let us think upon the vernal showers
That gladden the green earth, and we shall find
A pleasure in the dimness of the stars.
And hark! the Nightingale begins its song,
"Most musical, most melancholy" [1] bird!
A melancholy bird? Oh! idle thought!
In nature there is nothing melancholy.
But some night-wandering man, whose heart was pierced
With the remembrance of a grievous wrong,
Or slow distemper, or neglected love
(And so poor Wretch! filled all things with himself,
And made all gentle sounds tell back the tale
Of his own sorrow), he, and such as he,
First named these notes a melancholy strain.
And many a poet echoes the conceit;
Poet who hath been building up the rhyme
When he had better far have stretch'd his limbs
Beside a brook in mossy forest-dell,
By Sun or Moon-light, to the influxes
Of shapes and sounds and shifting elements
Surrendering his whole spirit, of his song
And of his fame forgetful! so his fame
Should share in Nature's immortality,
A venerable thing! and so his song
Should make all Nature lovelier, and itself
Be loved like Nature! But 't will not be so;
And youths and maidens most poetical,
Who lose the deepening twilights of the spring
In ball-rooms and hot theatres, they still,
Full of meek sympathy, must heave their sighs
O'er Philomela's pity-pleading strains.

My friend, and thou, our Sister! we have learnt
A different lore: we may not thus profane
Nature's sweet voices, always full of love
And joyance! 'T is the merry Nightingale
That crowds, and hurries, and precipitates
With fast thick warble his delicious notes,
As he were fearful that an April night
Would be too short for him to utter forth
His love-chant, and disburthen his full soul
Of all its music!

And I know a grove
Of large extent, hard by a castle huge,
Which the great lord inhabits not; and so
This grove is wild with tangling underwood,
And the trim walks are broken up, and grass,
Thin grass and king-cups grow within the paths.
But never elsewhere in one place I knew
So many Nightingales; and far and near,
In wood and thicket, over the wide grove,
They answer and provoke each other's song,
With skirmish and capricious passagings,
And murmurs musical and swift jug jug,
And one low piping sound more sweet than all—
Stirring the air with such a harmony,
That should you close your eyes, you might almost
Forget it was not day! On moonlight bushes,
Whose dewy leaflets are but half disclosed,
You may perchance behold them on the twigs,
Their bright, bright eyes, their eyes both bright and full,
Glistening, while many a glow-worm in the shade
Lights up her love-torch.

[1] "A beautiful white cloud of foam at momentary intervals coursed by the side of the vessel with a roar, and little stars of flame danced and sparkled and went out in it: and every now and then light detachments of this white cloud-like foam darted off from the vessel's side, each with its own small constellation, over the sea, and scoured out of sight like a Tartar troop over a wilderness."—*The Friend*, p. 220.

[1] This passage in Milton possesses an excellence far superior to that of mere description. It is spoken in the character of the melancholy man, and has therefore a dramatic propriety. The author makes this remark, to rescue himself from the charge of having alluded with levity to a line in Milton: a charge than which none could be more painful to him, except perhaps that of having ridiculed his Bible.

A most gentle Maid,
Who dwelleth in her hospitable home
Hard by the castle, and at latest eve
(Even like a lady vow'd and dedicate
To something more than Nature in the grove)
Glides through the pathways; she knows all their notes,
That gentle Maid! and oft a moment's space,
What time the Moon was lost behind a cloud,
Hath heard a pause of silence; till the Moon
Emerging, hath awaken'd earth and sky
With one sensation, and these wakeful Birds
Have all burst forth in choral minstrelsy,
As if some sudden gale had swept at once
A hundred airy harps! And she hath watch'd
Many a Nightingale perch'd giddily
On blossomy twig still swinging from the breeze,
And to that motion tune his wanton song
Like tipsy joy that reels with tossing head.

Farewell, O Warbler! till to-morrow eve,
And you, my friends! farewell, a short farewell!
We have been loitering long and pleasantly,
And now for our dear homes.—That strain again?
Full fain it would delay me! My dear babe,
Who, capable of no articulate sound,
Mars all things with his imitative lisp,
How he would place his hand beside his ear,
His little hand, the small forefinger up,
And bid us listen! And I deem it wise
To make him Nature's Play-mate. He knows well
The evening-star; and once, when he awoke
In most distressful mood (some inward pain
Had made up that strange thing, an infant's dream),
I hurried with him to our orchard-plot,
And he beheld the Moon, and, hush'd at once,
Suspends his sobs, and laughs most silently,
While his fair eyes, that swam with undropp'd tears
Did glitter in the yellow moon-beam! Well!—
It is a father's tale: But if that Heaven
Should give me life, his childhood shall grow up
Familiar with these songs, that with the night
He may associate joy! Once more farewell,
Sweet Nightingale! Once more my friends! farewell.

FROST AT MIDNIGHT.

The Frost performs its secret ministry,
Unhelp'd by any wind. The owlet's cry
Came loud—and hark, again! loud as before.
The inmates of my cottage, all at rest,
Have left me to that solitude, which suits
Abstruser musings: save that at my side
My cradled infant slumbers peacefully.
'T is calm indeed! so calm, that it disturbs
And vexes meditation with its strange
And extreme silentness. Sea, hill, and wood,
This populous village! Sea, and hill, and wood,
With all the numberless goings on of life,
Inaudible as dreams! the thin blue flame
Lies on my low burnt fire, and quivers not;
Only that film, which flutter'd on the grate,
Still flutters there, the sole unquiet thing.
Methinks, its motion in this hush of nature
Gives it dim sympathies with me who live,
Making it a companionable form,
Whose puny flaps and freaks the idling Spirit
By its own moods interprets, every where
Echo or mirror seeking of itself,
And makes a toy of Thought.

But O! how oft,
How oft, at school, with most believing mind
Presageful, have I gazed upon the bars,
To watch that fluttering *stranger!* and as oft
With unclosed lids, already had I dreamt
Of my sweet birth-place, and the old church-tower,
Whose bells, the poor man's only music, rang
From morn to evening, all the hot Fair-day,
So sweetly, that they stirr'd and haunted me
With a wild pleasure, falling on mine ear
Most like articulate sounds of things to come!
So gazed I, till the soothing things, I dreamt,
Lull'd me to sleep, and sleep prolong'd my dreams!
And so I brooded all the following morn,
Awed by the stern preceptor's face, mine eye
Fix'd with mock study on my swimming book:
Save if the door half open'd, and I snatch'd
A hasty glance, and still my heart leap'd up,
For still I hoped to see the *stranger's* face,
Townsman, or aunt, or sister more beloved,
My play-mate when we both were clothed alike!

Dear Babe, that sleepest cradled by my side,
Whose gentle breathings, heard in this deep calm,
Fill up the interspersed vacancies
And momentary pauses of the thought!
My babe so beautiful! it thrills my heart
With tender gladness, thus to look at thee,
And think that thou shalt learn far other lore,
And in far other scenes! For I was rear'd
In the great city, pent 'mid cloisters dim,
And saw nought lovely but the sky and stars.
But *thou*, my babe! shalt wander like a breeze
By lakes and sandy shores, beneath the crags
Of ancient mountain, and beneath the clouds,
Which image in their bulk both lakes and shores
And mountain crags: so shalt thou see and hear
The lovely shapes and sounds intelligible
Of that eternal language, which thy God
Utters, who from eternity doth teach
Himself in all, and all things in himself.
Great universal Teacher! he shall mould
Thy spirit, and by giving make it ask.

Therefore all seasons shall be sweet to thee,
Whether the summer clothe the general earth
With greenness, or the redbreast sit and sing
Betwixt the tufts of snow on the bare branch
Of mossy apple-tree, while the nigh thatch
Smokes in the sun-thaw; whether the eave-drops fall
Heard only in the trances of the blast,
Or if the secret ministry of frost
Shall hang them up in silent icicles,
Quietly shining to the quiet Moon.

TO A FRIEND,

TOGETHER WITH AN UNFINISHED POEM.

Thus far my scanty brain hath built the rhyme
Elaborate and swelling: yet the heart
Not owns it. From thy spirit-breathing powers

I ask not now, my friend! the aiding verse,
Tedious to thee, and from thy anxious thought
Of dissonant mood. In fancy (well I know)
From business wand'ring far and local cares,
Thou creepest round a dear-loved Sister's bed
With noiseless step, and watchest the faint look,
Soothing each pang with fond solicitude,
And tenderest tones medicinal of love.
I too a Sister had, an only Sister——
She loved me dearly, and I doated on her!
To her I pour'd forth all my puny sorrows
(As a sick patient in his nurse's arms),
And of the heart those hidden maladies
That shrink ashamed from even Friendship's eye.
Oh! I have woke at midnight, and have wept
Because SHE WAS NOT!—Cheerily, dear Charles!
Thou thy best friend shalt cherish many a year:
Such warm presages feel I of high Hope.
For not uninterested the dear maid
I 've view'd—her soul affectionate yet wise,
Her polish'd wit as mild as lambent glories,
That play around a sainted infant's head.
He knows (the Spirit that in secret sees,
Of whose omniscient and all-spreading Love
Aught to *implore* [1] were impotence of mind)
That my mute thoughts are sad before his throne,
Prepared, when he his healing ray vouchsafes,
To pour forth thanksgiving with lifted heart,
And praise Him Gracious with a Brother's joy!

December, 1794.

THE HOUR WHEN WE SHALL MEET AGAIN.

COMPOSED DURING ILLNESS AND IN ABSENCE.

DIM hour! that sleep'st on pillowing clouds afar,
O rise and yoke the turtles to thy car!
Bend o'er the traces, blame each lingering dove,
And give me to the bosom of my love!
My gentle love, caressing and carest,
With heaving heart shall cradle me to rest;
Shed the warm tear-drop from her smiling eyes,
Lull with fond woe, and med'cine me with sighs:
While finely-flushing float her kisses meek,
Like melted rubies, o'er my pallid cheek.
Chill'd by the night, the drooping rose of May
Mourns the long absence of the lovely day;
Young Day, returning at her promised hour,
Weeps o'er the sorrows of her fav'rite flower;
Weeps the soft dew, the balmy gale she sighs,
And darts a trembling lustre from her eyes.
New life and joy th' expanding flow'ret feels:
His pitying Mistress mourns, and mourning heals!

LINES TO JOSEPH COTTLE.

MY honour'd friend! whose verse concise, yet clear,
Tunes to smooth melody unconquer'd sense,
May your fame fadeless live, as « never-sere »
The ivy wreathes yon oak, whose broad defence
Embow'rs me from noon's sultry influence!
For, like that nameless riv'let stealing by,
Your modest verse, to musing Quiet dear,
Is rich with tints heaven-borrow'd: the charm'd eye
Shall gaze undazzled there, and love the soften'd sky.

Circling the base of the Poetic mount
A stream there is, which rolls in lazy flow
Its coal-black waters from Oblivion's fount:
The vapour-poison'd birds, that fly too low,
Fall with dead swoop, and to the bottom go.
Escaped that heavy stream on pinion fleet,
Beneath the Mountain's lofty-frowning brow,
Ere aught of perilous ascent you meet,
A mead of mildest charm delays th' unlab'ring feet.

Not there the cloud-climb'd rock, sublime and vast,
That like some giant king, o'erglooms the hill;
Nor there the pine-grove to the midnight blast
Makes solemn music! But th' unceasing rill
To the soft wren or lark's descending trill
Murmurs sweet undersong 'mid jasmin bowers.
In this same pleasant meadow, at your will,
I ween, you wander'd—there collecting flow'rs
Of sober tint, and herbs of med'cinable powers!

There for the monarch-murder'd Soldier's tomb
You wove th' unfinish'd wreath of saddest hues;[1]
And to that holier chaplet[2] added bloom,
Besprinkling it with Jordan's cleansing dews.
But lo! your Henderson[3] awakes the Muse——
His spirit beckon'd from the mountain's height!
You left the plain and soar'd 'mid richer views!
So Nature mourn'd, when sank the first day's light,
With stars, unseen before, spangling her robe of night!

Still soar, my friend, those richer views among,
Strong, rapid, fervent, flashing Fancy's beam!
Virtue and Truth shall love your gentler song;
But Poesy demands th' impassion'd theme:
Waked by Heaven's silent dews at eve's mild gleam,
What balmy sweets Pomona breathes around!
But if the vext air rush a stormy stream,
Or Autumn's shrill gust moan in plaintive sound,
With fruits and flowers she loads the tempest-honour'd ground.

[1] I utterly recant the sentiment contained in the lines

Of whose omniscient and all-spreading love
Aught to *implore* were impotence of mind,

it being written in Scripture, « *Ask*, and it shall be given you, » and my human reason being moreover convinced of the propriety of offering *petitions* as well as thanksgivings to the Deity.

IV. ODES AND MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.

THE THREE GRAVES.

A FRAGMENT OF A SEXTON'S TALE.

[THE Author has published the following humble fragment, encouraged by the decisive recommendation of more than one of our most celebrated living Poets. The language was intended to be dramatic; that is, suited to the narrator; and the metre corresponds to the homeliness of the diction. It is therefore presented as the fragment, not of a Poem, but of a common Ballad-tale. Whether this is sufficient to justify the adoption of such a style, in any metrical composition not professedly ludicrous, the Author is himself in some doubt. At all events, it is not presented as Poetry, and it is in no way connected with the Author's judgment concerning Poetic diction. Its merits, if any, are exclusively Psychological.

[1] War, a Fragment. [2] John the Baptist, a Poem.
[3] Monody on John Henderson.

The story which must be supposed to have been narrated in the first and second parts is as follows.

Edward, a young farmer, meets at the house of Ellen, her bosom-friend, Mary, and commences an acquaintance, which ends in a mutual attachment. With her consent, and by the advice of their common friend Ellen, he announces his hopes and intentions to Mary's Mother, a widow-woman bordering on her fortieth year, and from constant health, the possession of a competent property, and from having had no other children but Mary and another daughter (the Father died in their infancy), retaining, for the greater part, her personal attractions and comeliness of appearance; but a woman of low education and violent temper. The answer which she at once returned to Edward's application was remarkable—«Well, Edward! you are a handsome young fellow, and you shall have my Daughter.» From this time all their wooing passed under the Mother's eye; and, in fine, she became herself enamoured of her future Son-in-law, and practised every art, both of endearment and of calumny, to transfer his affections from her daughter to herself. (The outlines of the Tale are positive facts, and of no very distant date, though the author has purposely altered the names and the scene of action, as well as invented the characters of the parties and the detail of the incidents.) Edward, however, though perplexed by her strange detractions from her daughter's good qualities, yet in the innocence of his own heart still mistaking her increasing fondness for motherly affection; she, at length overcome by her miserable passion, after much abuse of Mary's temper and moral tendencies, exclaimed with violent emotion—«O Edward! indeed, indeed, she is not fit for you—she has not a heart to love you as you deserve. It is I that love you! Marry me, Edward! and I will this very day settle all my property on you.»—The Lover's eyes were now opened; and thus taken by surprise, whether from the effect of the horror which he felt, acting as it were hysterically on his nervous system, or that at the first moment he lost the sense of guilt of the proposal in the feeling of its strangeness and absurdity, he flung her from him and burst into a fit of laughter. Irritated by this almost to frenzy, the woman fell on her knees, and in a loud voice that approached to a scream, she prayed for a Curse both on him and on her own Child. Mary happened to be in the room directly above them, heard Edward's laugh and her Mother's blasphemous prayer, and fainted away. He, hearing the fall, ran up stairs, and taking her in his arms, carried her off to Ellen's home; and after some fruitless attempts on her part toward a reconciliation with her Mother, she was married to him.—And here the third part of the Tale begins.

I was not led to chuse this story from any partiality to tragic, much less to monstrous events (though at the time that I composed the verses, somewhat more than twelve years ago, I was less averse to such subjects than at present), but from finding in it a striking proof of the possible effect on the imagination, from an Idea violently and suddenly impressed on it. I had been reading Bryan Edwards's account of the effect of the *Obi* Witchcraft on the Negroes in the West-Indies, and Hearne's deeply interesting Anecdotes of similar workings on the imagination of the Copper Indians (those of my readers who have it in their power will be well repaid for the trouble of referring to those works for the passages alluded to), and I conceived the design of showing that instances of this kind are not peculiar to savage or barbarous tribes, and of illustrating the mode in which the mind is affected in these cases, and the progress and symptoms of the morbid action on the fancy from the beginning.

The Tale is supposed to be narrated by an old Sexton, in a country church-yard, to a Traveller whose curiosity had been awakened by the appearance of three graves, close by each other, to two only of which there were grave-stones. On the first of these was the name, and dates, as usual: on the second, no name, but only a date, and the words, The Mercy of God is infinite.]

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PART III.

The grapes upon the vicar's wall
Were ripe as ripe could be;
And yellow leaves in sun and wind
Were falling from the tree.

On the hedge-elms in the narrow lane
Still swung the spikes of corn:
Dear Lord! it seems but yesterday—
Young Edward's marriage-morn.

Up through that wood behind the church,
There leads from Edward's door
A mossy track, all over-bough'd
For half a mile or more.

And from their house-door by that track
The Bride and Bridegroom went;
Sweet Mary, though she was not gay,
Seem'd cheerful and content.

But when they to the church-yard came,
I've heard poor Mary say,
As soon as she stepp'd into the sun,
Her heart it died away.

And when the vicar join'd their hands,
Her limbs did creep and freeze;
But when they pray'd, she thought she saw
Her mother on her knees.

And o'er the church-path they return'd—
I saw poor Mary's back,
Just as she stepp'd beneath the boughs
Into the mossy track.

Her feet upon the mossy track
The married maiden set:
That moment—I have heard her say—
She wish'd she could forget.

The shade o'er-flush'd her limbs with heat—
Then came a chill like death:
And when the merry bells rang out,
They seem'd to stop her breath.

Beneath the foulest Mother's curse
No child could ever thrive:
A Mother is a Mother still,
The holiest thing alive.

So five months pass'd: the Mother still
Would never heal the strife;
But Edward was a loving man,
And Mary a fond wife.

«My sister may not visit us,
My mother says her nay:
O Edward! you are all to me,
I wish for your sake I could be
More lifesome and more gay.

«I'm dull and sad! indeed, indeed
I know I have no reason!
Perhaps I am not well in health,
And 't is a gloomy season.»

'T was a drizzly time—no ice, no snow!
And on the few fine days
She stirr'd not out, lest she might meet
Her Mother in the ways.

But Ellen, spite of miry ways
And weather dark and dreary,
Trudged every day to Edward's house,
And made them all more cheery.

Oh! Ellen was a faithful Friend,
More dear than any Sister!
As cheerful too as singing lark;
And she ne'er left them till 't was dark,
And then they always miss'd her.

And now Ash-Wednesday came—that day
But few to church repair:
For on that day you know we read
The Commination prayer.

Our late old vicar, a kind man,
Once, Sir, he said to me,
He wish'd that service was clean out
Of our good Liturgy.

The Mother walk'd into the church—
To Ellen's seat she went:
Though Ellen always kept her church,
All church-days during Lent.

And gentle Ellen welcomed her
With courteous looks and mild.
Thought she « what if her heart should melt,
And all be reconciled!»

The day was scarcely like a day—
The clouds were black outright:
And many a night, with half a Moon,
I 've seen the church more light.

The wind was wild; against the glass
The rain did beat and bicker;
The church-tower swinging over head,
You scarce could hear the vicar!

And then and there the Mother knelt,
And audibly she cried—
« Oh! may a clinging curse consume
This woman by my side!

« O hear me, hear me, Lord in Heaven,
Although you take my life—
O curse this woman, at whose house
Young Edward woo'd his wife.

« By night and day, in bed and bower,
O let her cursed be!!!»
So having pray'd, steady and slow,
She rose up from her knee!
And left the church, nor e'er again
The church-door enter'd she.

I saw poor Ellen kneeling still,
So pale! I guess'd not why:
When she stood up, there plainly was
A trouble in her eye.

And when the prayers were done, we all
Came round and ask'd her why:
Giddy she seem'd, and sure, there was
A trouble in her eye.

But ere she from the church-door stepp'd,
She smiled and told us why:
« It was a wicked woman's curse,»
Quoth she, « and what care I?»

She smiled, and smiled, and pass'd it off
Ere from the door she stept—
But all agree it would have been
Much better had she wept.

And if her heart was not at ease,
This was her constant cry—
« It was a wicked woman's curse—
God 's good, and what care I?»

There was a hurry in her looks,
Her struggles she redoubled:
« It was a wicked woman's curse,
And why should I be troubled?»

These tears will come—I dandled her
When 't was the merest fairy—
Good creature! and she hid it all:
She told it not to Mary.

But Mary heard the tale: her arms
Round Ellen's neck she threw;
« O Ellen, Ellen, she cursed me,
And now she hath cursed you!»

I saw young Edward by himself
Stalk fast adown the lea,
He snatch'd a stick from every fence,
A twig from every tree.

He snapp'd them still with hand or knee,
And then away they flew!
As if with his uneasy limbs
He knew not what to do!

You see, good Sir! that single hill?
His farm lies underneath:
He heard it there, he heard it all,
And only gnash'd his teeth.

Now Ellen was a darling love
In all his joys and cares:
And Ellen's name and Mary's name
Fast link'd they both together came,
Whene'er he said his prayers.

And in the moment of his prayers
He loved them both alike:
Yea, both sweet names with one sweet joy
Upon his heart did strike!

He reach'd his home, and by his looks
They saw his inward strife:
And they clung round him with their arms,
Both Ellen and his wife.

And Mary could not check her tears,
So on his breast she bow'd;
Then Frenzy melted into Grief,
And Edward wept aloud.

Dear Ellen did not weep at all,
But closelier did she cling,
And turned her face, and looked as if
She saw some frightful thing.

PART IV.

To see a man tread over graves
I hold it no good mark;
'T is wicked in the sun and moon,
And bad luck in the dark!

You see that grave? The Lord he gives,
The Lord, he takes away:
O Sir! the child of my old age
Lies there as cold as clay.

Except that grave, you scarce see one
That was not dug by me:
I 'd rather dance upon 'em all
Than tread upon these three!

« Ay, Sexton! 't is a touching tale.»
You, Sir! are but a lad;
This month I 'm in my seventieth year,
And still it makes me sad.

And Mary's sister told it me,
For three good hours and more;
Though I had heard it, in the main,
From Edward's self, before.

Well! it pass'd off! the gentle Ellen
Did well nigh dote on Mary;
And she went oftener than before,
And Mary loved her more and more:
She managed all the dairy.

To market she on market-days,
To church on Sundays came;
All seem'd the same: all seem'd so, Sir!
But all was not the same!

Had Ellen lost her mirth? Oh! no!
But she was seldom cheerful;
And Edward look'd as if he thought
That Ellen's mirth was fearful.

When by herself, she to herself
Must sing some merry rhyme;
She could not now be glad for hours,
Yet silent all the time.

And when she soothed her friend, through all
Her soothing words 't was plain
She had a sore grief of her own,
A haunting in her brain.

And oft she said, I 'm not grown thin!
And then her wrist she spann'd;
And once, when Mary was down-cast,
She took her by the hand,
And gazed upon her, and at first
She gently press'd her hand;

Then harder, till her grasp at length
Did gripe like a convulsion!
Alas! said she, we ne'er can be
Made happy by compulsion!

And once her both arms suddenly
Round Mary's neck she flung,
And her heart panted, and she felt
The words upon her tongue.

She felt them coming, but no power
Had she the words to smother;
And with a kind of shriek she cried,
« Oh Christ! you 're like your Mother!»

So gentle Ellen now no more
Could make this sad house cheery;
And Mary's melancholy ways
Drove Edward wild and weary.

Lingering he raised his latch at eve,
Though tired in heart and limb:
He loved no other place, and yet
Home was no home to him.

One evening he took up a book,
And nothing in it read;
Then flung it down, and groaning cried,
« Oh! Heaven! that I were dead.»

Mary look'd up into his face,
And nothing to him said;
She tried to smile, and on his arm
Mournfully lean'd her head.

And he burst into tears, and fell
Upon his knees in prayer:
« Her heart is broke! O God! my grief,
It is too great to bear!»

'T was such a foggy time as makes
Old Sextons, Sir! like me,
Rest on their spades to cough; the spring
Was late uncommonly.

And then the hot days, all at once,
They came, we knew not how:
You look'd about for shade, when scarce
A leaf was on a bough.

It happen'd then ('t was in the bower
A furlong up the wood:
Perhaps you know the place, and yet
I scarce know how you should).

No path leads thither, 't is not nigh
To any pasture-plot;
But cluster'd near the chattering brook,
Lone hollies mark'd the spot.

Those hollies of themselves a shape
As of an arbour took,
A close, round arbour; and it stands
Not three strides from a brook.

Within this arbour, which was still
With scarlet berries hung,
Were these three friends, one Sunday morn,
Just as the first bell rung.

'T is sweet to hear a brook, 't is sweet
To hear the Sabbath-bell,
'T is sweet to hear them both at once,
Deep in a woody dell.

His limbs along the moss, his head
Upon a mossy heap,
With shut-up senses, Edward lay:
That brook e'en on a working day
Might chatter one to sleep.

And he had pass'd a restless night,
And was not well in health;
The women sat down by his side,
And talk'd as 't were by stealth.

« The sun peeps through the close thick leaves,
See, dearest Ellen! see!
'T is in the leaves, a little sun,
No bigger than your e'e;

« A tiny sun, and it has got
A perfect glory too;
Ten thousand threads and hairs of light,
Make up a glory, gay and bright,
Round that small orb, so blue.»

And then they argued of those rays,
What colour they might be:
Says this, « they 're mostly green;» says that,
« They 're amber-like to me.»

So they sat chatting, while bad thoughts
Were troubling Edward's rest;
But soon they heard his hard quick pants,
And the thumping in his breast.

« A Mother too!» these self-same words
Did Edward mutter plain;
His face was drawn back on itself,
With horror and huge pain.

Both groan'd at once, for both knew well
What thoughts were in his mind;
When he waked up, and stared like one
That hath been just struck blind.

He sat upright; and ere the dream
Had had time to depart,
« O God, forgive me! (he exclaim'd)
I have torn out her heart.»

Then Ellen shriek'd, and forthwith burst
Into ungentle laughter;
And Mary shiver'd, where she sat,
And never she smiled after.

Carmen reliquum in futurum tempus relegatum. To-morrow! and To-morrow! and To-morrow!——

DEJECTION;

AN ODE.

Late, late yestreen I saw the new Moon,
With the old Moon in her arms;
And I fear, I fear, my Master dear!
We shall have a deadly storm.
Ballad of Sir Patrick Spens.

I.

Well! If the Bard was weather-wise, who made
The grand old ballad of Sir Patrick Spence,
This night, so tranquil now, will not go hence
Unroused by winds, that ply a busier trade
Than those which mould yon cloud in lazy flakes,
Or the dull sobbing draught, that moans and rakes
Upon the strings of this Æolian lute,
Which better far were mute.
For lo! the New-moon winter-bright!
And overspread with phantom light,
(With swimming phantom light o'erspread
But rimmed and circled by a silver thread)
I see the old Moon in her lap, foretelling
The coming on of rain and squally blast.
And oh! that even now the gust were swelling,
And the slant night-shower driving loud and fast!
Those sounds which oft have raised me, whilst they awed,
And sent my soul abroad,
Might now perhaps their wonted impulse give,
Might startle this dull pain, and make it move and live!

II.

A grief without a pang, void, dark, and drear,
A stifled, drowsy, unimpassion'd grief,
Which finds no natural outlet, no relief,
In word, or sigh, or tear—
O Lady! in this wan and heartless mood,
To other thoughts by yonder throstle woo'd,
All this long eve, so balmy and serene,
Have I been gazing on the western sky,
And its peculiar tint of yellow green:
And still I gaze—and with how blank an eye!
And those thin clouds above, in flakes and bars,
That give away their motion to the stars;
Those stars, that glide behind them or between,
Now sparkling, now bedimm'd, but always seen:
Yon crescent Moon, as fix'd as if it grew
In its own cloudless, starless lake of blue;
I see them all so excellently fair,
I see, not feel how beautiful they are!

III.

My genial spirits fail,
And what can these avail
To lift the smothering weight from off my breast?
It were a vain endeavour,
Though I should gaze for ever
On that green light that lingers in the west:
I may not hope from outward forms to win
The passion and the life, whose fountains are within.

IV.

O Lady! we receive but what we give,
And in our life alone does nature live:

Ours is her wedding-garment, ours her shroud!
And would we aught behold, of higher worth,
Than that inanimate cold world allowed
To the poor loveless ever-anxious crowd,
Ah! from the soul itself must issue forth,
A light, a glory, a fair luminous cloud
Enveloping the Earth—
And from the soul itself must there be sent
A sweet and potent voice, of its own birth,
Of all sweet sounds the life and element!

V.

O pure of heart! thou need'st not ask of me
What this strong music in the soul may be!
What, and wherein it doth exist,
This light, this glory, this fair luminous mist,
This beautiful and beauty-making power.
Joy, virtuous Lady! Joy that ne'er was given,
Save to the pure, and in their purest hour,
Life, and Life's Effluence, Cloud at once and Shower,
Joy, Lady! is the spirit and the power,
Which wedding Nature to us gives in dower
A new Earth and new Heaven,
Undreamt of by the sensual and the proud—
Joy is the sweet voice, Joy the luminous cloud—
We in ourselves rejoice!
And thence flows all that charms or ear or sight,
All melodies the echoes of that voice,
All colours a suffusion from that light.

VI.

There was a time when, though my path was rough,
This joy within me dallied with distress,
And all misfortunes were but as the stuff
Whence Fancy made me dreams of happiness:
For hope grew round me, like the twining vine,
And fruits, and foliage, not my own, seemed mine.
But now afflictions bow me down to earth:
Nor care I that they rob me of my mirth,
But oh! each visitation
Suspends what nature gave me at my birth,
My shaping spirit of Imagination.
For not to think of what I needs must feel,
But to be still and patient, all I can;
And haply by abstruse research to steal
From my own nature all the natural Man—
This was my sole resource, my only plan:
Till that which suits a part infects the whole,
And now is almost grown the habit of my Soul.

VII.

Hence, viper thoughts, that coil around my mind,
Reality's dark dream!
I turn from you, and listen to the wind,
Which long has raved unnoticed. What a scream
Of agony by torture lengthen'd out
That lute sent forth! Thou Wind, that ravest without,
Bare crag, or mountain-tairn,[1] or blasted tree,
Or pine-grove whither woodman never clomb,
Or lonely house, long held the witches' home,
Methinks were fitter instruments for thee,
Mad Lutanist! who in this month of showers,
Of dark brown gardens, and of peeping flowers,
Makest Devils' yule, with worse than wintry song,
The blossoms, buds, and timorous leaves among.
Thou Actor, perfect in all tragic sounds!
Thou mighty Poet, e'en to Frenzy bold!
What tell'st thou now about?
'T is of the Rushing of an Host in rout,
With groans of trampled men, with smarting wounds—
At once they groan with pain, and shudder with the cold!
But hush! there is a pause of deepest silence!
And all that noise, as of a rushing crowd,
With groans, and tremulous shudderings—all is over—
It tells another tale, with sounds less deep and loud!
A tale of less affright,
And temper'd with delight,
As Otway's self had framed the tender lay,
'T is of a little child
Upon a lonesome wild,
Not far from home, but she hath lost her way:
And now moans low in bitter grief and fear,
And now screams loud, and hopes to make her mother hear.

VIII.

'T is midnight, but small thoughts have I of sleep:
Full seldom may my friend such vigils keep!
Visit her, gentle Sleep! with wings of healing,
And may this storm be but a mountain-birth,
May all the stars hang bright above her dwelling,
Silent as though they watch'd the sleeping Earth!
With light heart may she rise,
Gay fancy, cheerful eyes,
Joy lift her spirit, joy attune her voice:
To her may all things live, from Pole to Pole,
Their life the eddying of her living soul!
O simple spirit, guided from above,
Dear Lady! friend devoutest of my choice,
Thus mayest thou ever, evermore rejoice.

[1] Tairn is a small lake, generally, if not always, applied to the lakes up in the mountains, and which are the feeders of those in the valleys. This address to the Storm-wind will not appear extravagant to those who have heard it at night, and in a mountainous country.

ODE TO GEORGIANA, DUCHESS OF DEVONSHIRE,

ON THE TWENTY-FOURTH STANZA IN HER « PASSAGE OVER MOUNT GOTHARD.»

And hail the Chapel! hail the Platform wild!
Where Tell directed the avenging Dart,
With well-strung arm, that first preserved his Child,
Then aim'd the arrow at the Tyrant's heart.

Splendour's fondly foster'd child!
And did you hail the Platform wild,
Where once the Austrian fell
Beneath the shaft of Tell?
O Lady, nursed in pomp and pleasure!
Whence learnt you that heroic measure?

Light as a dream your days their circlets ran,
From all that teaches Brotherhood to Man;
Far, far removed! from want, from hope, from fear!
Enchanting music lull'd your infant ear,
Obeisance, praises soothed your infant heart:
Emblazonments and old ancestral crests,
With many a bright obtrusive form of art,
Detain'd your eye from nature: stately vests,

That veiling strove to deck your charms divine,
Rich viands, and the pleasurable wine,
Were yours unearn'd by toil; nor could you see
The unenjoying toiler's misery.
And yet, free Nature's uncorrupted child,
You hail'd the Chapel and the Platform wild,
Where once the Austrian fell
Beneath the shaft of Tell!
O Lady, nursed in pomp and pleasure!
Whence learnt you that heroic measure?

There crowd your finely-fibred frame,
All living faculties of bliss;
And Genius to your cradle came,
His forehead wreathed with lambent flame,
And bending low, with godlike kiss
Breathed in a more celestial life;
But boasts not many a fair compeer,
A heart as sensitive to joy and fear?
And some, perchance, might wage an equal strife,
Some few, to nobler being wrought,
Co-rivals in the nobler gift of thought.
Yet *these* delight to celebrate
Laurell'd War and plumy State;
Or in verse and music dress
Tales of rustic happiness—
Pernicious Tales! insidious Strains!
That steel the rich man's breast,
And mock the lot unblest,
The sordid vices and the abject pains,
Which evermore must be
The doom of Ignorance and Penury!
But you, free Nature's uncorrupted child,
You hail'd the chapel and the Platform wild,
Where once the Austrian fell
Beneath the shaft of Tell!
O Lady, nursed in pomp and pleasure!
Where learnt you that heroic measure?

You were a Mother! That most holy name,
Which Heaven and Nature bless,
I may not vilely prostitute to those
Whose Infants owe them less
Than the poor Caterpillar owes
Its gaudy Parent Fly.
You were a Mother! at your bosom fed
The Babes that loved you. You, with laughing eye,
Each twilight-thought, each nascent feeling read,
Which you yourself created. Oh! delight!
A second time to be a Mother,
Without the Mother's bitter groans:
Another thought, and yet another,
By touch, or taste, by looks or tones
O'er the growing Sense to roll,
The Mother of your infant's Soul!
The Angel of the Earth, who, while he guides
His chariot-planet round the goal of day,
All trembling gazes on the Eye of God,
A moment turn'd his awful face away;
And as he view'd you, from his aspect sweet
New influences in your being rose,
Blest Intuitions and Communions fleet
With living Nature, in her joys and woes!
Thenceforth your soul rejoiced to see
The shrine of social Liberty!
O beautiful! O Nature's child!
'T was thence you hail'd the Platform wild,
Where once the Austrian fell
Beneath the shaft of Tell!
O Lady, nursed in pomp and pleasure!
Thence learnt you that heroic measure.

ODE TO TRANQUILLITY.

Tranquillity! thou better name
Than all the family of Fame!
Thou ne'er wilt leave my riper age
To low intrigue, or factious rage;
For oh! dear child of thoughtful Truth,
To thee I gave my early youth,
And left the bark, and blest the steadfast shore,
Ere yet the Tempest rose and scared me with its roar.

Who late and lingering seeks thy shrine,
On him but seldom, power divine,
Thy spirit rests! Satiety
And Sloth, poor counterfeits of thee,
Mock the tired worldling. Idle Hope
And dire Remembrance interlope,
To vex the feverish slumbers of the mind:
The bubble floats before, the spectre stalks behind.

But me thy gentle hand will lead
At morning through the accustom'd mead;
And in the sultry summer's heat
Will build me up a mossy seat;
And when the gust of Autumn crowds
And breaks the busy moonlight clouds,
Thou best the thought canst raise, the heart attune,
Light as the busy clouds, calm as the gliding Moon.

The feeling heart, the searching soul,
To thee I dedicate the whole!
And while within myself I trace
The greatness of some future race,
Aloof with hermit-eye I scan
The present works of present man—
A wild and dream-like trade of blood and guile,
Too foolish for a tear, too wicked for a smile!

TO A YOUNG FRIEND,

ON HIS PROPOSING TO DOMESTICATE WITH THE AUTHOR.

COMPOSED IN 1796.

A mount, not wearisome and bare and steep,
But a green mountain variously up-piled,
Where o'er the jutting rocks soft mosses creep,
Or colour'd lichens with slow oozing weep;
Where cypress and the darker yew start wild;
And 'mid the summer torrent's gentle dash
Dance brighten'd the red clusters of the ash;
Beneath whose boughs, by those still sounds beguiled,
Calm Pensiveness might muse herself to sleep;
Till haply startled by some fleecy dam,
That rustling on the bushy clift above,
With melancholy bleat of anxious love,
Made meek inquiry for her wandering lamb:

Such a green mountain 't were most sweet to climb,
E'en while the bosom ached with loneliness—
How more than sweet, if some dear friend should bless
The adventurous toil, and up the path sublime
Now lead, now follow: the glad landscape round,
Wide and more wide, increasing without bound!

O then 't were loveliest sympathy, to mark
The berries of the half-uprooted ash
Dripping and bright; and list the torrent's dash,—
Beneath the cypress, or the yew more dark,
Seated at ease, on some smooth mossy rock;
In social silence now, and now to unlock
The treasured heart; arm link'd in friendly arm,
Save if the one, his muse's witching charm
Muttering brow-bent, at unwatch'd distance lag;
Till high o'er head his beckoning friend appears,
And from the forehead of the topmost crag
Shouts eagerly: for haply *there* uprears
That shadowing pine its old romantic limbs,
Which latest shall detain the enamour'd sight
Seen from below, when eve the valley dims,
Tinged yellow with the rich departing light;
And haply, bason'd in some unsunn'd cleft,
A beauteous spring, the rock's collected tears,
Sleeps shelter'd there, scarce wrinkled by the gale!
Together thus, the world's vain turmoil left,
Stretch'd on the crag, and shadow'd by the pine,
And bending o'er the clear delicious fount,
Ah! dearest youth! it were a lot divine
To cheat our noons in moralizing mood,
While west-winds fann'd our temples toil-bedew'd:
Then downwards slope, oft pausing, from the mount,
To some lone mansion, in some woody dale,
Where smiling with blue eye, domestic bliss
Gives *this* the Husband's, *that* the Brother's kiss!

Thus rudely versed in allegoric lore,
The Hill of Knowledge I essay'd to trace;
That verdurous hill with many a resting-place,
And many a stream, whose warbling waters pour
To glad, and fertilize the subject plains;
That hill with secret springs, and nooks untrod,
And many a fancy-blest and holy sod,
Where Inspiration, his diviner strains
Low murmuring, lay; and starting from the rocks
Stiff evergreens, whose spreading foliage mocks
Want's barren soil, and the bleak frosts of age,
And Bigotry's mad fire-invoking rage!

O meek retiring spirit! we will climb,
Cheering and cheer'd, this lovely hill sublime;
And from the stirring world up-lifted high
(Whose noises, faintly wafted on the wind,
To quiet musings shall attune the mind,
And oft the melancholy *theme* supply),
There, while the prospect through the gazing eye
Pours all its healthful greenness on the soul,
We 'll smile at wealth, and learn to smile at fame,
Our hopes, our knowledge, and our joys the same,
As neighbouring fountains image, each the whole:
Then when the mind hath drunk its fill of truth
We 'll discipline the heart to pure delight,
Rekindling sober joy's domestic flame.
They whom I love shall love thee. Honour'd youth!
Now may Heaven realize this vision bright!

LINES TO W. L. ESQ.

WHILE HE SANG A SONG TO PURCELL'S MUSIC.

While my young cheek retains its healthful hues,
And I have many friends who hold me dear;
L——! methinks, I would not often hear
Such melodies as thine, lest I should lose
All memory of the wrongs and sore distress,
For which my miserable brethren weep!
But should uncomforted misfortunes steep
My daily bread in tears and bitterness;
And if at death's dread moment I should lie
With no beloved face at my bed-side,
To fix the last glance of my closing eye,
Methinks, such strains, breathed by my angel-guide,
Would make me pass the cup of anguish by,
Mix with the blest, nor know that I had died!

ADDRESSED TO A YOUNG MAN OF FORTUNE

WHO ABANDONED HIMSELF TO AN INDOLENT AND CAUSELESS MELANCHOLY.

Hence that fantastic wantonness of woe,
O Youth to partial Fortune vainly dear!
To plunder'd Want's half-shelter'd hovel go,
Go, and some hunger-bitten Infant hear
Moan haply in a dying Mother's ear:
Or when the cold and dismal fog-damps brood
O'er the rank church-yard with sere elm-leaves strew'd,
Pace round some widow's grave, whose dearer part
Was slaughter'd, where o'er his uncoffin'd limbs
The flocking flesh-birds scream'd! Then, while thy heart
Groans, and thine eye a fiercer sorrow dims,
Know (and the truth shall kindle thy young mind)
What nature makes thee mourn, she bids thee heal!
O abject! if, to sickly dreams resign'd,
All effortless thou leave life's common-weal
A prey to Tyrants, Murderers of Mankind.

SONNET TO THE RIVER OTTER.

Dear native Brook! wild Streamlet of the West!
How many various-fated years have past,
What happy, and what mournful hours, since last
I skimm'd the smooth thin stone along thy breast,
Numbering its light leaps! yet so deep imprest
Sink the sweet scenes of childhood, that mine eyes
I never shut amid the sunny ray,
But straight with all their tints thy waters rise,
Thy crossing plank, thy marge with willows grey,
And bedded sand that vein'd with various dyes
Gleam'd through thy bright transparence! On my way,
Visions of childhood! oft have ye beguiled
Lone manhood's cares, yet waking fondest sighs:
Ah! that once more I were a carcless child!

SONNET.

COMPOSED ON A JOURNEY HOMEWARD; THE AUTHOR HAVING RECEIVED INTELLIGENCE OF THE BIRTH OF A SON, SEPTEMBER 20, 1796.

Oft o'er my brain does that strange fancy roll
Which makes the present (while the flash doth last)

Seem a mere semblance of some unknown past,
Mix'd with such feelings, as perplex the soul
Self-question'd in her sleep; and some have said [1]
We lived, ere yet this robe of Flesh we wore.
O my sweet baby! when I reach my door,
If heavy looks should tell me thou art dead
(As sometimes, through excess of hope, I fear),
I think that I should struggle to believe
Thou wert a spirit, to this nether sphere
Sentenced for some more venial crime to grieve;
Didst scream, then spring to meet Heaven's quick reprieve,
While we wept idly o'er thy little bier!

SONNET.

TO A FRIEND WHO ASKED, HOW I FELT WHEN THE NURSE FIRST PRESENTED MY INFANT TO ME.

Charles! my slow heart was only sad, when first
I scann'd that face of feeble infancy:
For dimly on my thoughtful spirit burst
All I had been, and all my child might be!
But when I saw it on its Mother's arm,
And hanging at her bosom (she the while
Bent o'er its features with a tearful smile)
Then I was thrill'd and melted, and most warm
Impress'd a Father's kiss: and all beguiled
Of dark remembrance and presageful fear,
I seem'd to see an angel-form appear—
'T was even thine, beloved woman mild!
So for the Mother's sake the Child was dear,
And dearer was the Mother for the Child.

THE VIRGIN'S CRADLE-HYMN.

COPIED FROM A PRINT OF THE VIRGIN IN A CATHOLIC VILLAGE IN GERMANY.

Dormi, Jesu! Mater ridet,
Quæ tam dulcem somnum videt,
Dormi, Jesu! blandule!
Si non dormis, Mater plorat,
Inter fila cantans orat
Blande, veni, somnule.

ENGLISH.

Sleep, sweet babe! my cares beguiling:
Mother sits beside thee smiling:
Sleep, my darling, tenderly!
If thou sleep not, mother mourneth,
Singing as her wheel she turneth:
Come, soft slumber, balmily!

ON THE CHRISTENING OF A FRIEND'S CHILD.

This day among the faithful placed
And fed with fontal manna;
O with maternal title graced
Dear Anna's dearest Anna!

While others wish thee wise and fair,
A maid of spotless fame,
I 'll breathe this more compendious prayer—
Mayst thou deserve thy name!

Thy Mother's name, a potent spell,
That bids the Virtues hie
From mystic grove and living cell
Confest to Fancy's eye;

Meek Quietness, without offence;
Content, in homespun kirtle;
True Love; and True Love's Innocence,
White Blossom of the Myrtle!

Associates of thy name, sweet Child!
These Virtues mayst thou win;
With face as eloquently mild
To say, they lodge within.

So when, her tale of days all flown,
Thy Mother shall be miss'd here;
When Heaven at length shall claim its own,
And Angels snatch their Sister;

Some hoary-headed Friend, perchance,
May gaze with stifled breath;
And oft, in momentary trance,
Forget the waste of death.

Ev'n thus a lovely rose I view'd
In summer-swelling pride;
Nor mark'd the bud, that green and rude
Peep'd at the Rose's side.

It chanced, I pass'd again that way
In Autumn's latest hour,
And wond'ring saw the self-same spray
Rich with the self-same flower.

Ah fond deceit! the rude green bud
Alike in shape, place, name,
Had bloom'd, where bloom'd its parent stud,
Another and the same!

EPITAPH ON AN INFANT.

Its balmy lips the Infant blest
Relaxing from its Mother's breast,
How sweet it heaves the happy sigh
Of innocent Satiety!

And such my Infant's latest sigh!
O tell, rude stone! the passer by,
That here the pretty babe doth lie,
Death sang to sleep with Lullaby.

MELANCHOLY.

A FRAGMENT.

Stretch'd on a moulder'd Abbey's broadest wall,
Where ruining ivies propp'd the ruins steep—
Her folded arms wrapping her tatter'd pall,
Had Melancholy mused herself to sleep.

[1] Ην που ημων η ψυχη πριν εν τωδε τω ανθρωπινω ειδει γενεσθαι.

Plat. *in Phædon.*

The fern was press'd beneath her hair,
The dark green Adder's Tongue [1] was there;
And still as past the flagging sea-gale weak,
The long lank leaf bow'd fluttering o'er her cheek.

That pallid cheek was flush'd: her eager look
Beam'd eloquent in slumber! Inly wrought,
Imperfect sounds her moving lips forsook,
And her bent forehead work'd with troubled thought.
Strange was the dream——

TELL'S BIRTH-PLACE.

IMITATED FROM STOLBERG.

Mark this holy chapel well!
The Birth-place, this, of William Tell.
Here, where stands God's altar dread,
Stood his parents' marriage-bed.

Here first, an infant to her breast,
Him his loving mother prest;
And kiss'd the babe, and bless'd the day,
And pray'd as mothers use to pray:

« Vouchsafe him health, O God, and give
The Child thy servant still to live!»
But God had destined to do more
Through him, than through an armed power.

God gave him reverence of laws,
Yet stirring blood in Freedom's cause—
A spirit to his rocks akin,
The eye of the Hawk, and the fire therein!

To Nature and to Holy writ
Alone did God the boy commit:
Where flash'd and roar'd the torrent, oft
His soul found wings, and soar'd aloft!

The straining oar and chamois chase
Had form'd his limbs to strength and grace:
On wave and wind the boy would toss,
Was great, nor knew how great he was!

He knew not that his chosen hand,
Made strong by God, his native land
Would rescue from the shameful yoke
Of *Slavery*——the which he broke!

A CHRISTMAS CAROL.

The Shepherds went their hasty way,
And found the lowly stable-shed
Where the Virgin-Mother lay:
And now they check'd their eager tread,
For to the Babe, that at her bosom clung,
A Mother's song the Virgin-Mother sung.

They told her how a glorious light,
Streaming from a heavenly throng,
Around them shone, suspending night!
While, sweeter than a Mother's song,
Blest Angels heralded the Saviour's birth,
Glory to God on high! and Peace on Earth.

She listen'd to the tale divine,
And closer still the Babe she press'd;
And while she cried, the Babe is mine!
The milk rush'd faster to her breast:
Joy rose within her, like a summer's morn;
Peace, Peace on Earth! the Prince of Peace is born.

Thou Mother of the Prince of Peace,
Poor, simple, and of low estate!
That Strife should vanish, Battle cease,
O why should this thy soul elate?
Sweet Music's loudest note, the Poet's story,——
Did'st thou ne'er love to hear of Fame and Glory?

And is not War a youthful King,
A stately Hero clad in Mail?
Beneath his footsteps laurels spring;
Him Earth's majestic monarchs hail
Their Friend, their Playmate! and his bold bright eye
Compels the maiden's love-confessing sigh.

«Tell this in some more courtly scene,
To maids and youths in robes of state!
I am a woman poor and mean,
And therefore is my Soul elate.
War is a ruffian, all with guilt defiled,
That from the aged Father tears his Child!

« A murderous fiend, by fiends adored,
He kills the Sire and starves the Son;
The Husband kills, and from her board
Steals all his Widow's toil had won;
Plunders God's world of beauty; rends away
All safety from the Night, all comfort from the Day.

« Then wisely is my soul elate,
That Strife should vanish, Battle cease:
I'm poor and of a low estate,
The Mother of the Prince of Peace.
Joy rises in me, like a summer's morn:
Peace, Peace on Earth! the Prince of Peace is born.»

HUMAN LIFE,

ON THE DENIAL OF IMMORTALITY.

If dead, we cease to be; if total gloom
Swallow up life's brief flash for aye, we fare
As summer-gusts, of sudden birth and doom,
Whose sound and motion not alone declare,
But *are* their *whole* of being! If the Breath
Be Life itself, and not its task and tent,
If even a soul like Milton's can know death;
O Man! thou vessel purposeless, unmeant,
Yet drone-hive strange of phantom purposes!
Surplus of nature's dread activity,
Which, as she gazed on some nigh-finished vase,
Retreating slow, with meditative pause,
She form'd with restless hands unconsciously!
Blank accident! nothing's anomaly!
If rootless thus, thus substanceless thy state,
Go, weigh thy dreams, and be thy Hopes, thy Fears,
The counter-weights!—Thy Laughter and thy Tears
Mean but themselves, each fittest to create,

[1] A botanical mistake. The plant which the poet here describes is called the Hart's Tongue.

And to repay the other! Why rejoices
  Thy heart with hollow joy for hollow good?
  Why cowl thy face beneath the Mourner's hood,
Why waste thy sighs, and thy lamenting voices,
  Image of image, Ghost of Ghostly Elf,
That such a thing as thou feel'st warm or cold!
Yet what and whence thy gain, if thou withhold
  These costless shadows of thy shadowy self?
Be sad! be glad! be neither! seek, or shun!
Thou hast no reason why! Thou canst have none:
Thy being's being is contradiction.

THE VISIT OF THE GODS.

IMITATED FROM SCHILLER.

Never, believe me,
  Appear the Immortals,
    Never alone:
Scarce had I welcomed the Sorrow-beguiler,
Iacchus! but in came Boy Cupid the Smiler;
Lo! Phœbus the Glorious descends from his Throne!
They advance, they float in, the Olympians all!
  With Divinities fills my
    Terrestrial Hall!

  How shall I yield you
    Due entertainment,
      Celestial Quire?
Me rather, bright guests! with your wings of upbuoyance
Bear aloft to your homes, to your banquets of joyance,
That the roofs of Olympus may echo my lyre!
Ha! we mount! on their pinions they waft up my Soul!

  O give me the Nectar!
    O fill me the Bowl!
  Give him the Nectar!
  Pour out for the Poet,
    Hebe! pour free!
Quicken his eyes with celestial dew,
That Styx the detested no more he may view,
And like one of us Gods may conceit him to be!
Thanks, Hebe! I quaff it! Io Pæan, I cry!
  The Wine of the Immortals
    Forbids me to die!

ELEGY,

IMITATED FROM ONE OF AKENSIDE'S BLANK VERSE INSCRIPTIONS.

Near the lone pile with ivy overspread,
  Fast by the rivulet's sleep-persuading sound,
Where « sleeps the moonlight» on yon verdant bed—
  O humbly press that consecrated ground!

For there does Edmund rest, the learned swain!
  And there his spirit most delights to rove:
Young Edmund! famed for each harmonious strain,
  And the sore wounds of ill-requited love.

Like some tall tree that spreads its branches wide,
  And loads the west-wind with its soft perfume,
His manhood blossom'd: till the faithless pride
  Of fair Matilda sank him to the tomb.

But soon did righteous Heaven her guilt pursue!
  Where'er with wilder'd step she wander'd pale,
Still Edmund's image rose to blast her view,
  Still Edmund's voice accused her in each gale.

With keen regret, and conscious guilt's alarms,
  Amid the pomp of affluence she pined;
Nor all that lured her faith from Edmund's arms
  Could lull the wakeful horror of her mind.

Go, Traveller! tell the tale with sorrow fraught:
  Some tearful maid perchance, or blooming youth,
May hold it in remembrance; and be taught
  That Riches cannot pay for Love or Truth.

KUBLA KHAN;

OR, A VISION IN A DREAM.

[The following fragment is here published at the request of a poet of great and deserved celebrity, and, as far as the Author's own opinions are concerned, rather as a psychological curiosity, than on the ground of any supposed *poetic* merits.

In the summer of the year 1797, the Author, then in ill health, had retired to a lonely farm-house between Porlock and Linton, on the Exmoor confines of Somerset and Devonshire. In consequence of a slight indisposition, an anodyne had been prescribed, from the effects of which he fell asleep in his chair at the moment that he was reading the following sentence, or words of the same substance, in Purchas's « Pilgrimage:»—« Here the Khan Kubla commanded a palace to be built, and a stately garden thereunto; and thus ten miles of fertile ground were inclosed with a wall.» The author continued for about three hours in a profound sleep, at least of the external senses, during which time he has the most vivid confidence that he could not have composed less than from two to three hundred lines; if that indeed can be called composition in which all the images rose up before him as *things*, with a parallel production of the correspondent expressions, without any sensation, or consciousness of effort. On awaking he appeared to himself to have a distinct recollection of the whole, and taking his pen, ink, and paper, instantly and eagerly wrote down the lines that are here preserved. At this moment he was unfortunately called out by a person on business from Porlock, and detained by him above an hour, and on his return to his room, found, to his no small surprise and mortification, that though he still retained some vague and dim recollection of the general purport of the vision, yet, with the exception of some eight or ten scattered lines and images, all the rest had passed away like the images on the surface of a stream into which a stone had been cast, but, alas! without the after restoration of the latter:

  Then all the charm
  Is broken—all that phantom-world so fair
  Vanishes, and a thousand circlets spread,
  And each mis-shape the other. Stay awhile,
  Poor youth! who scarcely darest lift up thine eyes—
  The stream will soon renew its smoothness, soon
  The visions will return! And lo, he stays,
  And soon the fragments dim of lovely forms
  Come trembling back, unite, and now once more
  The pool becomes a mirror.

Yet from the still surviving recollections in his mind, the Author has frequently purposed to finish for himself what had been originally, as it were, given to him. Σαμερον αδτον ασω: but the to-morrow is yet to come.

As a contrast to this vision, I have annexed a fragment of a very different character, describing with equal fidelity the dream of pain and disease.—*Note to the first Edition*, 1816.]

In Xanadu did Kubla Khan
A stately pleasure-dome decree?
Where Alph, the sacred river, ran
Through caverns measureless to man,
  Down to a sunless sea.

So twice five miles of fertile ground
With walls and towers were girdled round:
And here were gardens bright with sinuous rills,
Where blossom'd many an incense-bearing tree;
And here were forests ancient as the hills,
Enfolding sunny spots of greenery.

But oh that deep romantic chasm which slanted
Down the green hill athwart a cedarn cover!
A savage place! as holy and enchanted
As e'er beneath a waning moon was haunted
By woman wailing for her demon-lover!
And from this chasm, with ceaseless turmoil seething,
As if this earth in fast thick pants were breathing,
A mighty fountain momently was forced:
Amid whose swift half-intermitted burst
Huge fragments vaulted like rebounding hail,
Or chaffy grain beneath the thresher's flail:
And 'mid these dancing rocks at once and ever
It flung up momently the sacred river.
Five miles, meandering with a mazy motion,
Through wood and dale the sacred river ran,
Then reach'd the caverns measureless to man,
And sank in tumult to a lifeless ocean:
And 'mid this tumult Kubla heard from far
Ancestral voices prophesying war!

The shadow of the dome of pleasure
Floated midway on the waves;
Where was heard the mingled measure
From the fountain and the caves.
It was a miracle of rare device,
A sunny pleasure-dome with caves of ice!
A damsel with a dulcimer
In a vision once I saw:
It was an Abyssinian maid,
And on her dulcimer she play'd,
Singing of Mount Abora.
Could I revive within me
Her symphony and song,
To such a deep delight 't would win me,
That with music loud and long,
I would build that dome in air,
That sunny dome! those caves of ice!
And all who heard should see them there,
And all should cry, Beware! Beware!
His flashing eyes, his floating hair!
Weave a circle round him thrice,
And close your eyes with holy dread,
For he on honey-dew hath fed
And drank the milk of Paradise.

THE PAINS OF SLEEP.

Ere on my bed my limbs I lay,
It hath not been my use to pray
With moving lips or bended knees;
But silently, by slow degrees,
My spirit I to Love compose,
In humble Trust mine eye-lids close,
With reverential resignation,
No wish conceived, no thought express'd!
Only a *sense* of supplication.
A sense o'er all my soul imprest
That I am weak, yet not unblest,
Since in me, round me, every where
Eternal Strength and Wisdom are.

But yester-night I pray'd aloud
In anguish and in agony,
Up-starting from the fiendish crowd
Of shapes and thoughts that tortured me:
A lurid light, a trampling throng,
Sense of intolerable wrong,
And whom I scorn'd, those only strong!
Thirst of revenge, the powerless will
Still baffled, and yet burning still!
Desire with loathing strangely mix'd,
On wild or hateful objects fix'd.
Fantastic passions! maddening brawl!
And shame and terror over all!
Deeds to be hid which were not hid,
Which all confused I could not know,
Whether I suffer'd, or I did:
For all seem'd guilt, remorse, or woe,
My own or others, still the same
Life-stifling fear, soul-stifling shame.

So two nights pass'd: the night's dismay
Sadden'd and stunn'd the coming day.
Sleep, the wide blessing, seem'd to me
Distemper's worst calamity.
The third night, when my own loud scream
Had waked me from the fiendish dream,
O'ercome with sufferings strange and wild,
I wept as I had been a child;
And having thus by tears subdued
My anguish to a milder mood,
Such punishments, I said, were due
To natures deepliest stain'd with sin:
For aye entempesting anew
The unfathomable hell within,
The horror of their deeds to view,
To know and loathe, yet wish and do!
Such griefs with such men well agree,
But wherefore, wherefore fall on me?
To be beloved is all I need,
And whom I love, I love indeed.

APPENDIX.

APOLOGETIC PREFACE

TO "FIRE, FAMINE, AND SLAUGHTER."

(See page 26).

At the house of a gentleman, who by the principles and corresponding virtues of a sincere Christian consecrates a cultivated genius and the favourable accidents of birth, opulence, and splendid connexions, it was my good fortune to meet, in a dinner-party, with more men of celebrity in science or polite literature, than are commonly found collected round the same table. In the course of conversation, one of the party reminded an illustrious Poet, then present, of some verses which he had recited that morning, and which had appeared in a newspaper under the name of a War-Eclogue, in which Fire, Famine, and Slaughter, were introduced as the speakers. The gentleman so addressed replied, that he was rather

surprised that none of us should have noticed or heard of the poem, as it had been, at the time, a good deal talked of in Scotland. It may be easily supposed, that my feelings were at this moment not of the most comfortable kind. Of all present, one only knew, or suspected me to be the author: a man who would have established himself in the first rank of England's living Poets, if the Genius of our country had not decreed that he should rather be the first in the first rank of its Philosophers and scientific Benefactors. It appeared the general wish to hear the lines. As my friend chose to remain silent, I chose to follow his example, and Mr ***** recited the Poem. This *he* could do with the better grace, being known to have ever been not only a firm and active Anti-Jacobin and Anti-Gallican, but likewise a zealous admirer of Mr Pitt, both as a good man and a great Statesman. As a Poet exclusively, he had been amused with the Eclogue; as a Poet, he recited it; and in a spirit, which made it evident, that he would have read and repeated it with the same pleasure, had his own name been attached to the imaginary object or agent.

After the recitation, our amiable host observed, that in his opinion Mr ***** had over-rated the merits of the poetry; but had they been tenfold greater, they could not have compensated for that malignity of heart, which could alone have prompted sentiments so atrocious. I perceived that my illustrious friend became greatly distressed on my account; but fortunately I was able to preserve fortitude and presence of mind enough to take up the subject without exciting even a suspicion how nearly and painfully it interested me.

What follows, is substantially the same as I then replied, but dilated and in language less colloquial. It was not my intention, I said, to justify the publication, whatever its author's feelings might have been at the time of composing it. That they are calculated to call forth so severe a reprobation from a good man, is not the worst feature of such poems. Their moral deformity is aggravated in proportion to the pleasure which they are capable of affording to vindictive, turbulent, and unprincipled readers. Could it be supposed, though for a moment, that the author seriously wished what he had thus wildly imagined, even the attempt to palliate an inhumanity so monstrous would be an insult to the hearers. But it seemed to me worthy of consideration, whether the mood of mind, and the general state of sensations, in which a Poet produces such vivid and fantastic images, is likely to co-exist, or is even compatible with, that gloomy and deliberate ferocity which a serious wish to *realize* them would pre-suppose. It had been often observed, and all my experience tended to confirm the observation, that prospects of pain and evil to others, and in general, all deep feelings of revenge, are commonly expressed in a few words, ironically tame, and mild. The mind under so direful and fiend-like an influence seems to take a morbid pleasure in contrasting the intensity of its wishes and feelings, with the slightness or levity of the expressions by which they are hinted; and indeed feelings so intense and solitary, if they were not precluded (as in almost all cases they would be) by a constitutional activity of fancy and association, and by the specific joyousness combined with it, would assuredly themselves preclude such activity. Passion, in its own quality, is the antagonist of action; though in an ordinary and natural degree the former alternates with the latter, and thereby revives and strengthens it. But the more intense and insane the passion is, the fewer and the more fixed are the correspondent forms and notions. A rooted hatred, an inveterate thirst of revenge, is a sort of madness, and still eddies round its favourite object, and exercises as it were a perpetual tautology of mind in thoughts and words, which admit of no adequate substitutes. Like a fish in a globe of glass, it moves restlessly round and round the scanty circumference, which it cannot leave without losing its vital element.

There is a second character of such imaginary representations as spring from a real and earnest desire of evil to another, which we often see in real life, and might even anticipate from the nature of the mind. The images, I mean, that a vindictive man places before his imagination, will most often be taken from the realities of life: they will be images of pain and suffering which he has himself seen inflicted on other men, and which he can fancy himself as inflicting on the object of his hatred. I will suppose that we had heard at different times two common sailors, each speaking of some one who had wronged or offended him: that the first with apparent violence had devoted every part of his adversary's body and soul to all the horrid phantoms and fantastic places that ever Quevedo dreamt of, and this in a rapid flow of those outré and wildly-combined execrations, which too often with our lower classes serve for *escape-valves* to carry off the excess of their passions, as so much superfluous steam that would endanger the vessel if it were retained. The other, on the contrary, with that sort of calmness of tone which is to the ear what the paleness of anger is to the eye, shall simply say, « If I chance to be made boatswain, as I hope I soon shall, and can but once get that fellow under my hand (and I shall be upon the watch for him), I'll tickle his pretty skin! I wont hurt him! oh no! I'll only cut the ——— to the *liver!*» I dare appeal to all present, which of the two they would regard as the least deceptive symptom of deliberate malignity? nay, whether it would surprise them to see the first fellow, an hour or two afterward, cordially shaking hands with the very man, the fractional parts of whose body and soul he had been so charitably disposing of; or even perhaps risking his life for him. What language Shakspeare considered characteristic of malignant disposition, we see in the speech of the good-natured Gratiano, who spoke « an infinite deal of nothing more than any man in all Venice;»

——Too wild, too rude and bold of voice!

the skipping spirit, whose thoughts and words reciprocally ran away with each other;

——O be thou damn'd, inexorable dog!
And for thy life let justice be accused!

and the wild fancies that follow, contrasted with Shylock's tranquil « *I stand here for law.*»

Or, to take a case more analogous to the present subject, should we hold it either fair or charitable to believe it to have been Dante's serious wish, that all the persons mentioned by him, (many recently departed, and some even alive at the time), should actually suffer the fantastic and horrible punishments, to which he has sentenced them in his *Hell and Purgatory*? Or what shall we say of the passages in which Bishop Jeremy Taylor anticipates the state of those who, vicious themselves,

have been the cause of vice and misery to their fellow-creatures? Could we endure for a moment to think that a spirit, like Bishop Taylor's, burning with Christian love; that a man constitutionally overflowing with pleasurable kindliness; who scarcely even in a casual illustration introduces the image of woman, child, or bird, but he embalms the thought with so rich a tenderness, as makes the very words seem beauties and fragments of poetry from a Euripides or Simonides;—can we endure to think, that a man *so* natured and so disciplined, did at the time of composing this horrible picture, attach a sober feeling of reality to the phrases? or that he would have described in the same tone of justification, in the same luxuriant flow of phrases, the tortures about to be inflicted on a living individual by a verdict of the Star-Chamber? or the still more atrocious sentences executed on the Scotch anti-prelatists and schismatics, at the command, and in some instances under the very eye of the Duke of Lauderdale, and of that wretched bigot who afterwards dishonoured and forfeited the throne of Great Britain? Or do we not rather feel and understand, that these violent words were mere bubbles, flashes and electrical apparitions, from the magic cauldron of a fervid and ebullient fancy, constantly fuelled by an unexampled opulence of language?

Were I now to have read by myself for the first time the Poem in question, my conclusion, I fully believe, would be, that the writer must have been some man of warm feelings and active fancy; that he had painted to himself the circumstances that accompany war in so many vivid and yet fantastic forms, as proved that neither the images nor the feelings were the result of observation, or in any way derived from realities. I should judge, that they were the product of his own seething imagination, and therefore impregnated with that pleasurable exultation which is experienced in all energetic exertion of intellectual power; that in the same mood he had generalized the causes of the war, and then personified the abstract, and christened it by the name which he had been accustomed to hear most often associated with its management and measures. I should guess that the minister was in the author's mind at the moment of composition, as completely ἀπαθὴς, ἀνατμόσαρκος, as Anacreon's grasshopper, and that he had as little notion of a real person of flesh and blood,

Distinguishable in member, joint, or limb,

as Milton had in the grim and terrible phantoms (half person, half allegory) which he has placed at the gates of Hell. I concluded by observing, that the Poem was not calculated to excite *passion* in *any* mind, or to make any impression except on *poetic* readers; and that from the culpable levity, betrayed at the close of the Eclogue by the grotesque union of epigrammatic wit with allegoric personification, in the allusion to the most fearful of thoughts, I should conjecture that the « rantin' Bardie,» instead of really believing, much less wishing, the fate spoken of in the last line, in application to any human individual, would shrink from passing the verdict even on the Devil himself, and exclaim with poor Burns,

But fare ye weel, auld Nickie-ben!
Oh! wad ye tak a thought an' men'!
Ye aiblins might—I dinna ken—
Still hae a stake—
I'm wae to think upon yon den,
Ev'n for your sake!

I need not say that these thoughts, which are here dilated, were in such a company only rapidly suggested. Our kind host smiled, and with a courteous compliment observed, that the defence was too good for the cause. My voice faultered a little, for I was somewhat agitated; though not so much on my own account as for the uneasiness that so kind and friendly a man would feel from the thought that he had been the occasion of distressing me. At length I brought out these words: « I must now confess, Sir! that I am author of that Poem. It was written some years ago. I do not attempt to justify my past self, young as I then was; but as little as I would now write a similar poem, so far was I even then from imagining, that the lines would be taken as more or less than a sport of fancy. At all events, if I know my own heart, there was never a moment in my existence in which I should have been more ready, had Mr Pitt's person been in hazard, to interpose my own body, and defend his life at the risk of my own.»

I have prefaced the Poem with this anecdote, because to have printed it without any remark might well have been understood as implying an unconditional approbation on my part, and this after many years consideration. But if it be asked why I re-published it at all? I answer, that the Poem had been attributed at different times to different other persons; and what I had dared beget, I thought it neither manly nor honourable not to dare farther. From the same motives I should have published perfect copies of two Poems, the one entitled *The Devil's Thoughts*, and the other *The Two Round Spaces on the Tomb-Stone*, but that the three first stanzas of the former, which were worth all the rest of the poem, and the best stanza of the remainder, were written by a friend of deserved celebrity; and because there are passages in both, which might have given offence to the religious feelings of certain readers. I myself indeed see no reason why vulgar superstitions, and absurd conceptions that deform the pure faith of a Christian, should possess a greater immunity from ridicule than stories of witches, or the fables of Greece and Rome. But there are those who deem it profaneness and irreverence to call an ape an ape, if it but wear a monk's cowl on its head; and I would rather reason with this weakness than offend it.

The passage from Jeremy Taylor to which I referred, is found in his second Sermon on Christ's Advent to Judgment; which is likewise the second in his year's course of sermons. Among many remarkable passages of the same character in those discourses, I have selected this as the most so. « But when this Lion of the tribe of Judah shall appear, then Justice shall strike and Mercy shall not hold her hands; she shall strike sore strokes, and Pity shall not break the blow. As there are treasures of good things, so hath God a treasure of wrath and fury, and scourges and scorpions; and then shall be produced the shame of Lust and the malice of Envy, and the groans of the oppressed and the persecutions of the saints, and the cares of Covetousness and the troubles of Ambition, *and the indolence of traitors and the violences of rebels*, and the rage of anger and the uneasiness of impatience, and the restlessness of un-

lawful desires; and by this time the monsters and diseases will be numerous and intolerable, when God's heavy hand shall press the *sanies* and the intolerableness, the obliquity and the unreasonableness, the amazement and the disorder, the smart and the sorrow, the guilt and the punishment, out from all our sins, and pour them into one chalice, and mingle them with an infinite wrath, and make the wicked drink of all the vengeance, and force it down their unwilling throats with the violence of devils and accursed spirits.»

That this Tartarean drench displays the imagination rather than the discretion of the compounder; that, in short, this passage and others of the kind are *in a bad taste*, few will deny at the present day. It would doubtless have more beloved the good bishop not to be wise beyond what is written, on a subject in which Eternity is opposed to Time, and a death threatened, not the negative, but the *positive* Oppositive of Life; a subject, therefore, which must of necessity be indescribable to the human understanding in our present state. But I can neither find nor believe, that it ever occurred to any reader to ground on such passages a charge against Bishop Taylor's humanity, or goodness of heart. I was not a little surprised therefore to find, in the Pursuits of Literature and other works, so horrible a sentence passed on Milton's moral character, for a passage in *his* prose-writings, as nearly parallel to this of Taylor's as two passages can well be conceived to be. All his merits, as a poet forsooth—all the glory of having written the Paradise Lost, are light in the scale, nay, kick the beam, compared with the atrocious malignity of heart expressed in the offensive paragraph. I remembered, in general, that Milton had concluded one of his works on Reformation, written in the fervour of his youthful imagination, in a high poetic strain, that wanted metre only to become a lyrical poem. I remembered that in the former part he had formed to himself a perfect ideal of human virtue, a character of heroic, disinterested zeal and devotion for Truth, Religion, and public Liberty, in Act and in Suffering, in the day of Triumph and in the hour of Martyrdom. Such spirits, as more excellent than others, he describes as having a more excellent reward, and as distinguished by a transcendent glory: and this reward and this glory he displays and particularises with an energy and brilliance that announced the Paradise Lost as plainly, as ever the bright purple clouds in the east announced the coming of the sun. Milton then passes to the gloomy contrast, to such men as from motives of selfish ambition and the lust of personal aggrandisement should, against their own light, persecute truth and the true religion, and wilfully abuse the powers and gifts entrusted to them, to bring vice, blindness, misery and slavery, on their native country, on the very country that had trusted, enriched and honoured them. Such beings, after that speedy and appropriate removal from their sphere of mischief which all good and humane men must of course desire, will, he takes for granted by parity of reason, meet with a punishment, an ignominy, and a retaliation, as much severer than other wicked men, as their guilt and its consequences were more enormous. His description of this imaginary punishment presents more distinct *pictures* to the fancy than the extract from Jeremy Taylor; but the *thoughts* in the latter are incomparably more exaggerated and horrific. All this I knew; but I neither remembered, nor by reference and careful re-perusal could discover, any other meaning, either in Milton or Taylor, but that good men will be rewarded, and the impenitent wicked punished, in proportion to their dispositions and intentional acts in this life; and that if the punishment of the least wicked be fearful beyond conception, all words and descriptions must be so far true, that they must fall short of the punishment that awaits the transcendently wicked. Had Milton stated either his ideal of virtue, or of depravity, as an individual or individuals actually existing? Certainly not! Is this representation worded historically, or only hypothetically? Assuredly the latter! Does he express it as his own *wish*, that after death they *should* suffer these tortures? or as a general consequence, deduced from reason and revelation, that such *will* be their fate? Again, the latter only! His wish is expressly confined to a speedy stop being put by Providence to their power of inflicting misery on others! But did he name or refer to any persons, living or dead? No! But the calumniators of Milton *dare say* (for what will calumny not dare say?) that he had Laud and Stafford in his mind, while writing of remorseless persecution, and the enslavement of a free country, from motives of selfish ambition. Now, what if a stern anti-prelatist should *dare say*, that in speaking of the *insolencies of traitors and the violences of rebels*, Bishop Taylor must have individualised in his mind, Hampden, Hollis, Pym, Fairfax, Ireton, and Milton? And what if he should take the liberty of concluding, that, in the after description, the Bishop was feeding and feasting his party-hatred, and with those individuals before the eyes of his imagination enjoying, trait by trait, horror after horror, the picture of their intolerable agonies? Yet this bigot would have an equal right thus to criminate the one good and great man, as these men have to criminate the other. Milton has said, and I doubt not but that Taylor with equal truth could have said it, «that in his whole life he never spake against a man even that his skin should be grazed.» He asserted this when one of his opponents (either Bishop Hall or his nephew) had called upon the women and children in the streets to take up stones and stone *him* (Milton). It is known that Milton repeatedly used his interest to protect the royalists; but even at a time when all lies would have been meritorious against him, no charge was made, no story pretended, that he had ever directly or indirectly engaged or assisted in their persecution. Oh! methinks there are other and far better feelings, which should be acquired by the perusal of our great elder writers. When I have before me on the same table, the works of Hammond and Baxter: when I reflect with what joy and dearness their blessed spirits are now loving each other: it seems a mournful thing that their names should be perverted to an occasion of bitterness among us, who are enjoying that happy mean which the *human* too-much on both sides was perhaps necessary to produce. «The tangle of delusions which stifled and distorted the growing tree of our well-being has been torn away! the parasite weeds that fed on its very roots have been plucked up with a salutary violence. To us there remain only quiet duties, the constant care, the gradual improvement, the cautious unhazardous labours of the industrious though contented gardener—to prune, to strengthen, to engraft, and one by one to remove from its leaves and fresh shoots the slug and the caterpillar. But far be it from us to undervalue with light and sense-

less detraction the conscientious hardihood of our predecessors, or even to condemn in them that vehemence, to which the blessings it won for us leave us now neither temptation or pretext. We ante-date the *feelings*, in order to criminate the *authors*, of our present Liberty, Light and Toleration.» (The Friend, p. 54.)

If ever two great men might seem, during their whole lives, to have moved in direct opposition, though neither of them has at any time introduced the name of the other, Milton and Jeremy Taylor were they. The former commenced his career by attacking the Church-Liturgy and all set forms of prayer. The latter, but far more successfully, by defending both. Milton's next work was then against the Prelacy and the then existing Church-Government—Taylor's in vindication and support of them. Milton became more and more a stern republican, or rather an advocate for that religious and moral aristocracy which, in his day, was *called* republicanism, and which, even more than royalism itself, is the direct antipode of modern jacobinism. Taylor, as more and more sceptical concerning the fitness of men in general for power, became more and more attached to the prerogatives of monarchy. From Calvinism, with a still decreasing respect for Fathers, Councils, and for Church-Antiquity in general, Milton seems to have ended in an indifference, if not a dislike, to *all* forms of ecclesiastic government, and to have retreated wholly into the inward and spiritual church-communion of his own spirit with the Light, that lighteth every man that cometh into the world. Taylor, with a growing reverence for authority, an increasing sense of the insufficiency of the Scriptures without the aids of tradition and the consent of authorized interpreters, advanced as far in his approaches (not indeed to Popery, but) to Catholicism, as a conscientious minister of the English Church could well venture. Milton would be, and would utter the same, to all, on all occasions: he would tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. Taylor would become all things to all men, if by any means he might benefit any; hence he availed himself, in his *popular* writings, of opinions and representations which stand often in striking contrast with the doubts and convictions expressed in his more philosophical works. He appears indeed, not *too severely* to have blamed that *management* of truth (*istam falsitatem dispensativam*) authorized and exemplified by almost all the fathers: *Integrum omnino Doctoribus et cœtus Christiani Antistitibus esse, ut dolos versent, falsa veris intermisceant et imprimis religionis hostes fallant, dummodo veritatis commodis et utilitati inserviant.*

The same antithesis might be carried on with the elements of their several intellectual powers. Milton, austere, condensed, imaginative, supporting his truth by direct enunciation of lofty moral sentiment and by distinct visual representations, and in the same spirit overwhelming what he deemed falsehood by moral denunciation and a succession of pictures appalling or repulsive. In his prose, so many metaphors, so many allegorical miniatures. Taylor, eminently discursive, accumulative, and (to use one of his own words) *agglomerative;* still more rich in images than Milton himself, but images of Fancy, and presented to the common and passive eye, rather than to the eye of the imagination. Whether supporting or assailing, he makes his way either by argument or by appeals to the affections, unsurpassed even by the Schoolmen in subtlety, agility and logic wit, and unrivalled by the most rhetorical of the fathers in the copiousness and vividness of his expressions and illustrations. Here words that convey feelings, and words that flash images, and words of abstract notion, flow together, and at once whirl and rush onward like a stream, at once rapid and full of eddies; and yet still interfused here and there, we see a tongue or isle of smooth water, with some picture in it of earth or sky, landscape or living group of quiet beauty.

Differing, then, so widely, and almost contrariantly, wherein did these great men agree? wherein did they resemble each other? In Genius, in Learning, in unfeigned Piety, in blameless Purity of Life, and in benevolent aspirations and purposes for the moral and temporal improvement of their fellow-creatures! Both of them wrote a Latin Accidence, to render education more easy and less painful to children; both of them composed hymns and psalms proportioned to the capacity of common congregations; both, nearly at the same time, set the glorious example of publicly recommending and supporting general Toleration, and the Liberty both of the Pulpit and the Press! In the writings of neither shall we find a single sentence, like those *meek deliverances to God's mercy*, with which Laud accompanied his votes for the mutilations and loathsome dungeoning of Leighton and others!—no where such a pious prayer as we find in Bishop Hall's memoranda of his own Life, concerning the subtle and witty Atheist that so grievously perplexed and gravelled him at Sir Robert Drury's, till *he prayed to the Lord to remove him*, and behold! his prayers were heard; for shortly afterward this philistine combatant went to London, and there perished of the plague in great misery! In short, no where shall we find the least approach, in the lives and writings of John Milton or Jeremy Taylor to that guarded gentleness, to that sighing reluctance, with which the holy Brethren of the Inquisition deliver over a condemned heretic to the civil magistrate, recommending him to mercy, and *hoping* that the magistrate will treat the erring brother with all possible mildness! —the magistrate, who too well knows what would be his own fate, if he dared offend them by acting on their recommendation.

The opportunity of diverting the reader from myself to characters more worthy of his attention, has led me far beyond my first intention; but it is not unimportant to expose the false zeal which has occasioned these attacks on our elder patriots. It has been too much the fashion, first to personify the Church of England, and then to speak of different individuals, who in different ages have been rulers in that church, as if in some strange way *they* constituted its personal identity. Why should a clergyman of the present day feel interested in the defence of Laud or Sheldon? Surely it is sufficient for the warmest partizan of our establishment, that he can assert with truth,—when our Church persecuted, it was on mistaken principles held in common by all Christendom; and at all events, far less culpable was this intolerance in the Bishops, who were maintaining the existing laws, than the persecuting spirit afterwards shown by their successful opponents, who had no such excuse, and who should have been taught mercy by their own sufferings, and wisdom by the utter failure of the experiment in their own case. We can say, that our Church, apostolical in its faith, primitive in its ceremonies, unequalled in its liturgical forms; that our

Church, which has kindled and displayed more bright and burning lights of Genius and Learning, than all other protestant churches since the Reformation, was (with the single exception of the times of Laud and Sheldon) least intolerant, when all Christians unhappily deemed a species of intolerance their religious duty; that Bishops of our church were among the first that contended against this error; and finally, that since the reformation, when tolerance became a fashion, the Church of England, in a tolerating age, has shown herself eminently tolerant, and far more so, both in Spirit and in fact, than many of her most bitter opponents, who profess to deem toleration itself an insult on the rights of mankind! As to myself, who not only know the Church-Establishment to be tolerant, but who see in it the greatest, if not the sole safe *bulwark* of Toleration, I feel no necessity of defending or palliating oppressions under the two Charleses, in order to exclaim with a full and fervent heart, ESTO PERPETUA!

The Rime of the Ancient Mariner.

IN SEVEN PARTS.

Facile credo, plures esse Naturas invisibiles quam visibiles in rerum universitate. Sed horum omnium familiam quis nobis enarrabit? et gradus et cognationes et discrimina et singulorum munera? Quid agunt? quæ loca habitant? Harum rerum notitiam semper ambivit ingenium humanum, nunquam attigit. Juvat, interea, non diffiteor, quandoque in animo, tanquam in tabulâ, majoris et melioris mundi imaginem contemplari: ne mens assuefacta hodiernæ vitæ minutiis se contrahat nimis, et tota subsidat in pusillas cogitationes. Sed veritati interea invigilandum est, modusque servandus, ut certa ab incertis, diem a nocte, distinguamus.—T. BURNET: *Archæol. Phil. p.* 68.

PART I.

An ancient Mariner meeteth three gallants bidden to a wedding-feast, and detaineth one.

It is an ancient Mariner,
And he stoppeth one of three:
«By the long grey beard and glittering eye,
Now wherefore stopp'st thou me?

«The Bridegroom's doors are open'd wide,
And I am next of kin;
The guests are met, the feast is set:
Mayst hear the merry din.»

He holds him with his skinny hand:
«There was a ship,» quoth he.
«Hold off! unhand me, grey-beard loon!»
Eftsoons his hand dropt he.

The wedding-guest is spell-bound by the eye of the old seafaring man, and constrained to hear his tale.

He holds him with his glittering eye—
The wedding-guest stood still,
And listens like a three-years' child;
The Mariner hath his will.

The wedding-guest sat on a stone,
He cannot chuse but hear;
And thus spake on that ancient man,
The bright-eyed mariner.

The ship was cheer'd, the harbour clear'd,
Merrily did we drop
Below the kirk, below the hill,
Below the light-house top.

The Mariner tells how the ship sailed southward with a good wind and fair weather, till it reached the line.

The Sun came up upon the left,
Out of the sea came he!
And he shone bright, and on the right
Went down into the sea.

Higher and higher every day,
Till over the mast at noon——
The Wedding-Guest here beat his breast,
For he heard the loud bassoon.

The bride hath paced into the hall,
Red as a rose is she;
Nodding their heads before her goes
The merry minstrelsy.

The wedding-guest heareth the bridal music; but the Mariner continueth his tale.

The Wedding-Guest he beat his breast,
Yet he cannot chuse but hear;
And thus spake on that ancient man,
The bright-eyed Mariner.

And now the STORM-BLAST came, and he
Was tyrannous and strong:
He struck with his o'ertaking wings,
And chased us south along.

The ship driven by a storm toward the south pole.

With sloping masts and dripping prow,
As who pursued with yell and blow
Still treads the shadow of his foe,
And forward bends his head,
The ship drove fast, loud roar'd the blast,
And southward aye we fled.

And now there came both mist and snow,
And it grew wondrous cold;
And ice, mast-high, came floating by,
As green as emerald.

The land of ice, and of fearful sounds, where no living thing was to be seen.

And through the drifts the snowy clifts
Did send a dismal sheen:
Nor shapes of men nor beasts we ken—
The ice was all between.

The ice was here, the ice was there,
The ice was all around:
It crack'd and growl'd, and roar'd and howl'd,
Like noises in a swound!

Till a great sea-bird, called the Albatross, came through the snow-fog, and was received with great joy and hospitality.

At length did cross an Albatross:
Thorough the fog it came;
As if it had been a Christian soul,
We hail'd it in God's name.

It ate the food it ne'er had eat,
And round and round it flew.
The ice did split with a thunder-fit;
The helmsman steer'd us through!

And lo! the Albatross proveth a bird of good omen, and followeth the ship as it returned northward through fog and floating ice.

And a good south-wind sprung up behind;
The Albatross did follow,
And every day, for food or play,
Came to the mariner's hollo!

In mist or cloud, on mast or shroud,
It perch'd for vespers nine;
Whiles all the night, through fog-smoke white,
Glimmer'd the white moon-shine.

The ancient Mariner inhospitably killeth the pious bird of good omen.

"God save thee, ancient Mariner!
From the fiends, that plague thee thus!
Why look'st thou so?"—With my cross-bow
I shot the ALBATROSS.

PART II.

THE Sun now rose upon the right:
Out of the sea came he,
Still hid in mist, and on the left
Went down into the sea.

And the good south wind still blew behind,
But no sweet bird did follow,
Nor any day for food or play
Came to the mariners' hollo!

His shipmates cry out against the ancient Mariner, for killing the bird of good-luck.

And I had done an hellish thing,
And it would work 'em woe:
For all averr'd, I had kill'd the bird
That made the breeze to blow.
Ah wretch! said they, the bird to slay,
That made the breeze to blow!

But when the fog cleared off, they justify the same, and thus make themselves accomplices in the crime.

Nor dim nor red, like God's own head,
The glorious Sun uprist:
Then all averr'd, I had kill'd the bird
That brought the fog and mist.
'T was right, said they, such birds to slay
That bring the fog and mist.

The fair breeze continues; the ship enters the Pacific Ocean and sails northward, even till it reaches the Line.

The fair breeze blew, the white foam flew,
The furrow follow'd free;
We were the first that ever burst
Into that silent sea.

The ship hath been suddenly becalmed.

Down dropt the breeze, the sails dropt down,
'T was sad as sad could be;
And we did speak only to break
The silence of the sea!

All in a hot and copper sky,
The bloody Sun, at noon,
Right up above the mast did stand,
No bigger than the Moon.

Day after day, day after day,
We stuck, nor breath nor motion
As idle as a painted ship
Upon a painted ocean.

Water, water, every where,
And all the boards did shrink:
Water, water, every where,
Nor any drop to drink.

And the Albatross begins to be avenged.

The very deep did rot: O Christ!
That ever this should be!
Yea, slimy things did crawl with legs
Upon the slimy sea.

About, about, in reel and rout
The death-fires danced at night;
The water, like a witch's oils,
Burnt green, and blue and white.

A spirit had followed them; one of the invisible inhabitants of this planet,— neither departed souls nor angels; concerning whom the learned Jew, Josephus, and the Platonic Constantinopolitan, Michael Psellus, may be consulted. They are very numerous, and there is no climate or element without one or more.

And some in dreams assured were
Of the spirit that plagued us so;
Nine fathom deep he had follow'd us
From the land of mist and snow.

And every tongue, thro' utter drought,
Was wither'd at the root;
We could not speak, no more than if
We had been choked with soot.

The shipmates, in their sore distress would fain throw the whole guilt on the ancient Mariner: — in sign whereof they hang the dead sea-bird round his neck.

Ah! well-a-day! what evil looks
Had I from old and young!
Instead of the cross, the Albatross
About my neck was hung.

PART III.

THERE pass'd a weary time. Each throat
Was parch'd, and glazed each eye.
A weary time! a weary time!
How glazed each weary eye,
When looking westward, I beheld
A something in the sky.

The ancient Mariner beholdeth a sign in the element afar off.

At first it seem'd a little speck,
And then it seem'd a mist;
It moved and moved, and took at last
A certain shape, I wist.

A speck, a mist, a shape, I wist!
And still it near'd and near'd:
As if it dodged a water-sprite,
It plunged and tack'd and veer'd.

At its nearer approach, it seemeth him to be a ship; and at a dear ransom he freeth his speech from the bonds of thirst.

With throats unslaked, with black lips baked,
We could nor laugh nor wail;
Through utter drought all dumb we stood;
I bit my arm, I suck'd the blood,
And cried, A sail! a sail!

With throats unslaked, with black lips baked,
Agape they heard me call;
A flash of joy. Gramercy! they for joy did grin,
And all at once their breath drew in,
As they were drinking all.

And horror follows: for can it be a ship, that comes onward without wind or tide? See! see! (I cried) she tacks no more!
Hither to work us weal;
Without a breeze, without a tide,
She steadies with upright keel!

The western wave was all a flame,
The day was well nigh done,
Almost upon the western wave
Rested the broad bright Sun;
When that strange shape drove suddenly
Betwixt us and the Sun.

It seemeth him but the skeleton of a ship. And straight the Sun was fleck'd with bars,
(Heaven's Mother send us grace!)
As if through a dungeon-grate he peer'd
With broad and burning face.

Alas! (thought I, and my heart beat loud)
How fast she nears and nears!
Are those *her* sails that glance in the Sun,
Like restless gossameres?

And its ribs are seen as bars on the face of the setting Sun. Are those *her* ribs through which the Sun
Did peer, as through a grate;
And is that Woman all her crew?
The spectre-woman and her death-mate, and no other on board the skeleton-ship. Is that a DEATH, and are there two?
Is DEATH that woman's mate?

Like vessel, like crew! *Her* lips were red, *her* looks were free,
Her locks were yellow as gold:
Her skin was as white as leprosy,
The Night-Mare LIFE-IN-DEATH was she,
Who thicks man's blood with cold.

DEATH, and LIFE-IN-DEATH have diced for the ship's crew, and she (the latter) winneth the ancient Mariner. The naked hulk alongside came,
And the twain were casting dice;
«The game is done! I 've won, I 've won!»
Quoth she, and whistles thrice.

No twilight within the courts of the sun. The Sun's rim dips; the stars rush out:
At one stride comes the Dark;
With far-heard whisper, o'er the sea
Off shot the spectre-bark.

At the rising of the moon, We listen'd and look'd sideways up!
Fear at my heart, as at a cup,
My life-blood seem'd to sip!
The stars were dim, and thick the night,
The steersman's face by his lamp gleam'd white;
From the sails the dew did drip—
Till clomb above the eastern bar
The horned Moon, with one bright star
Within the nether tip.

One after one, by the star-dogged Moon, One after another,
Too quick for groan or sigh
Each turn'd his face with a ghastly pang,
And cursed me with his eye.

Four times fifty living men His shipmates drop down dead;
(And I heard nor sigh nor groan),
With heavy thump, a lifeless lump,
They dropp'd down one by one.

The souls did from their bodies fly,— But LIFE-IN-DEATH begins her work on the ancient Mariner.
They fled to bliss or woe!
And every soul, it pass'd me by,
Like the whizz of my CROSS-BOW!

PART IV.

«I FEAR thee, ancient Mariner! The wedding-guest feareth that a spirit is talking to him;
I fear thy skinny hand!
And thou art long, and lank, and brown,
As is the ribb'd sea-sand.[1]

«I fear thee and thy glittering eye,
And thy skinny hand, so brown.»—
Fear not, fear not, thou Wedding-guest! But the ancient Mariner assureth him of his bodily life, and proceedeth to relate his horrible penance.
This body dropt not down.

Alone, alone, all, all alone,
Alone on a wide wide sea!
And never a saint took pity on
My soul in agony.

He despiseth the creatures of the calm. The many men, so beautiful!
And they all dead did lie:
And a thousand thousand slimy things
Lived on; and so did I.

And envieth that they should live, and so many lie dead. I look'd upon the rotting sea,
And drew my eyes away;
I look'd upon the rotting deck,
And there the dead men lay.

I look'd to Heaven, and tried to pray;
But or ever a prayer had gush'd,
A wicked whisper came, and made
My heart as dry as dust.

I closed my lids, and kept them close,
And the balls like pulses beat;
For the sky and the sea, and the sea and the sky,
Lay like a load on my weary eye,
And the dead were at my feet.

But the curse liveth for him in the eye of the dead men. The cold sweat melted from their limbs,
Nor rot nor reek did they;
The look with which they look'd on me
Had never pass'd away.

An orphan's curse would drag to Hell
A spirit from on high;

[1] For the two last lines of this stanza, I am indebted to Mr Wordsworth. It was on a delightful walk from Nether Stowey to Dulverton, with him and his sister, in the Autumn of 1797, that this Poem was planned, and in part composed.

But oh! more horrible than that
Is a curse in a dead man's eye!
Seven days, seven nights, I saw that curse,
And yet I could not die.

In his loneliness and fixedness he yearneth towards the journeying Moon, and the stars that still sojourn, yet still move onward; and every where the blue sky belongs to them, and is their appointed rest, and their native country and their own natural homes, which they enter unannounced, as lords that are certainly expected, and yet there is a silent joy at their arrival.

The moving Moon went up the sky,
And no where did abide:
Softly she was going up,
And a star or two beside—

Her beams bemock'd the sultry main,
Like April hoar-frost spread;
But where the ship's huge shadow lay,
The charmed water burnt alway
A still and awful red.

By the light of the Moon he beholdeth God's creatures of the great calm.

Beyond the shadow of the ship
I watch'd the water-snakes:
They moved in tracks of shining white,
And when they rear'd, the elfish light
Fell off in hoary flakes.

Within the shadow of the ship
I watch'd their rich attire:
Blue, glossy green, and velvet black,
They coil'd and swam; and ev'ry track
Was a flash of golden fire.

Their beauty and their happiness.

O happy living things! no tongue
Their beauty might declare:
A spring of love gush'd from my heart,

He blesseth them in his heart.

And I bless'd them unaware:
Sure my kind saint took pity on me,
And I bless'd them unaware.

The spell begins to break.

The self-same moment I could pray;
And from my neck so free
The Albatross fell off, and sank
Like lead into the sea.

PART V.

Oh Sleep! it is a gentle thing,
Beloved from pole to pole!
To Mary Queen the praise be given!
She sent the gentle sleep from Heaven,
That slid into my soul.

By grace of the holy Mother, the ancient Mariner is refreshed with rain.

The silly buckets on the deck,
That had so long remain'd,
I dreamt that they were fill'd with dew;
And when I awoke, it rain'd.

My lips were wet, my throat was cold,
My garments all were dank;
Sure I had drunken in my dreams,
And still my body drank.

I moved, and could not feel my limbs:
I was so light—almost
I thought that I had died in sleep,
And was a blessed ghost.

He heareth sounds and seeth strange sights and commotions in the sky and the element.

And soon I heard a roaring wind:
It did not come anear;
But with its sound it shook the sails,
That were so thin and sere.

The upper air burst into life!
And a hundred fire-flags sheen,
To and fro they were hurried about!
And to and fro, and in and out,
The wan stars danced between.

And the coming wind did roar more loud,
And the sails did sigh like sedge;
And the rain pour'd down from one black cloud;
The Moon was at its edge.

The thick black cloud was cleft, and still
The Moon was at its side:
Like waters shot from some high crag,
The lightning fell with never a jag,
A river steep and wide.

The bodies of the ship's crew are inspired, and the ship moves on;

The loud wind never reach'd the ship,
Yet now the ship moved on!
Beneath the lightning and the moon
The dead men gave a groan.

They groan'd, they stirr'd, they all uprose,
Nor spake, nor moved their eyes;
It had been strange, even in a dream,
To have seen those dead men rise.

The helmsman steer'd, the ship moved on;
Yet never a breeze up blew;
The mariners all 'gan work the ropes,
Where they were wont to do;
They raised their limbs like lifeless tools
—We were a ghastly crew.

The body of my brother's son
Stood by me, knee to knee:
The body and I pull'd at one rope,
But he said nought to me.

But not by the souls of the men, nor by dæmons of earth or middle air, but by a blessed troop of angelic spirits, sent down by the invocation of the guardian saint.

«I fear thee, ancient Mariner!»
Be calm, thou Wedding-guest!
'T was not those souls that fled in pain,
Which to their corses came again,
But a troop of spirits blest:

For when it dawn'd—they dropp'd their arms,
And cluster'd round the mast;
Sweet sounds rose slowly through their mouths,
And from their bodies pass'd.

Around, around, flew each sweet sound,
Then darted to the Sun;
Slowly the sounds came back again,
Now mix'd, now one by one.

Sometimes, a-dropping from the sky,
I heard the sky-lark sing;
Sometimes all little birds that are,
How they seem'd to fill the sea and air,
With their sweet jargoning!

And now 't was like all instruments,
Now like a lonely flute;
And now it is an angel's song,
That makes the Heavens be mute.

It ceased; yet still the sails made on
A pleasant noise till noon,
A noise like of a hidden brook
In the leafy month of June,
That to the sleeping woods all night
Singeth a quiet tune.

Till noon we quietly sailed on,
Yet never a breeze did breathe:
Slowly and smoothly went the ship,
Moved onward from beneath.

The lonesome spirit from the south-pole carries on the ship as far as the line, in obedience to the angelic troop, but still requireth vengeance.

Under the keel nine fathom deep,
From the land of mist and snow,
The spirit slid: and it was he
That made the ship to go.
The sails at noon left off their tune,
And the ship stood still also.

The Sun, right up above the mast,
Had fix'd her to the ocean:
But in a minute she 'gan stir,
With a short uneasy motion—
Backwards and forwards half her length
With a short uneasy motion.

Then like a pawing horse let go,
She made a sudden bound:
It flung the blood into my head,
And I fell down in a swound.

The Polar Spirit's fellow dæmons, the invisible inhabitants of the element, take part in his wrong; and two of them relate, one to the other, that penance long and heavy for the ancient Mariner hath been accorded to the Polar Spirit, who returneth southward.

How long in that same fit I lay,
I have not to declare;
But ere my living life return'd,
I heard and in my soul discern'd
Two VOICES in the air.

«Is it he?» quoth one, «Is this the man?
By him who died on cross,
With his cruel bow he laid full low
The harmless Albatross.

«The spirit who bideth by himself
In the land of mist and snow,
He loved the bird that loved the man
Who shot him with his bow.»

The other was a softer voice,
As soft as honey-dew:
Quoth he, «The man hath penance done,
And penance more will do.»

PART VI.

FIRST VOICE.

But tell me, tell me! speak again,
Thy soft response renewing—
What makes that ship drive on so fast?
What is the OCEAN doing?

SECOND VOICE.

Still as a slave before his lord,
The OCEAN hath no blast;
His great bright eye most silently
Up to the Moon is cast—

If he may know which way to go;
For she guides him smooth or grim.
See, brother, see! how graciously
She looketh down on him.

FIRST VOICE.

But why drives on that ship so fast,
Without or wave or wind?

The Mariner hath been cast into a trance; for the angelic power causeth the vessel to drive northward faster than human life could endure.

SECOND VOICE.

The air is cut away before,
And closes from behind.

Fly, brother, fly! more high, more high!
Or we shall be belated:
For slow and slow that ship will go,
When the Mariner's trance is abated.

I woke, and we were sailing on
As in a gentle weather:
'T was night, calm night, the Moon was high;
The dead men stood together.

The supernatural motion is retarded; the Mariner awakes, and his penance begins anew.

All stood together on the deck,
For a charnel-dungeon fitter:
All fix'd on me their stony eyes,
That in the Moon did glitter.

The pang, the curse, with which they died,
Had never pass'd away:
I could not draw my eyes from theirs,
Nor turn them up to pray.

The curse is finally expiated.

And now this spell was snapt: once more
I view'd the ocean green,
And look'd far forth, yet little saw
Of what had else been seen—

Like one, that on a lonesome road
Doth walk in fear and dread,
And having once turn'd round walks on,
And turns no more his head;
Because he knows, a frightful fiend
Doth close behind him tread.

But soon there breathed a wind on me,
Nor sound nor motion made:
Its path was not upon the sea,
In ripple or in shade.

It raised my hair, it fann'd my cheek
Like a meadow-gale of spring—
It mingled strangely with my fears,
Yet it felt like a welcoming.

Swiftly, swiftly flew the ship,
Yet she sail'd softly too:
Sweetly, sweetly blew the breeze—
On me alone it blew.

And the ancient Mariner beholdeth his native country.

Oh! dream of joy! is this indeed
The light-house top I see?
Is this the hill? is this the kirk?
Is this mine own countree?

We drifted o'er the harbour bar,
And I with sobs did pray—
O let me be awake, my God!
Or let me sleep alway.

The harbour-bay was clear as glass,
So smoothly it was strewn!
And on the bay the moonlight lay,
And the shadow of the moon.

The rock shone bright, the kirk no less
That stands above the rock:
The moonlight steep'd in silentness
The steady weathercock.

And the bay was white with silent light,
Till rising from the same,
Full many shapes, that shadows were,
In crimson colours came.

The angelic spirits leave the dead bodies,

And appear in their own forms of light.

A little distance from the prow
Those crimson shadows were:
I turn'd my eyes upon the deck—
Oh, Christ! what saw I there!

Each corse lay flat, lifeless and flat;
And, by the holy rood!
A man all light, a seraph-man,
On every corse there stood.

This seraph band, each waved his hand:
It was a heavenly sight!
They stood as signals to the land,
Each one a lovely light;

This seraph band, each waved his hand,
No voice did they impart—
No voice; but oh! the silence sank
Like music on my heart.

But soon I heard the dash of oars,
I heard the Pilot's cheer;
My head was turn'd perforce away,
And I saw a boat appear.

The Pilot and the Pilot's boy,
I heard them coming fast:
Dear Lord in Heaven! it was a joy
The dead men could not blast.

I saw a third—I heard his voice:
It is the Hermit good!
He singeth loud his godly hymns
That he makes in the wood.
He 'll shrieve my soul, he 'll wash away
The Albatross's blood.

PART VII.

The Hermit of the Wood.

This Hermit good lives in that wood
Which slopes down to the sea.
How loudly his sweet voice he rears!
He loves to talk with marineres
That come from a far countree.

He kneels at morn, and noon and eve—
He hath a cushion plump:
It is the moss that wholly hides
The rotted old oak-stump.

The skiff-boat near'd: I heard them talk,
«Why this is strange, I trow!
Where are those lights so many and fair,
That signal made but now?»

Approacheth the ship with wonder.

«Strange, by my faith!» the Hermit said—
«And they answer'd not our cheer!
The planks look'd warp'd! and see those sails,
How thin they are and sere!
I never saw aught like to them,
Unless perchance it were

«Brown skeletons of leaves that lag
My forest-brook along;
When the ivy-tod is heavy with snow,
And the owlet whoops to the wolf below,
That eats the she-wolf's young.»

«Dear Lord! it hath a fiendish look—
(The Pilot made reply,)
I am a-fear'd»—«Push on, push on!»
Said the Hermit cheerily.

The boat came closer to the ship,
But I nor spake nor stirr'd;
The boat came close beneath the ship,
And straight a sound was heard.

The ship suddenly sinketh.

Under the water it rumbled on,
Still louder and more dread:
It reach'd the ship, it split the bay;
The ship went down like lead.

The ancient Mariner is saved in the Pilot's boat.

Stunn'd by that loud and dreadful sound,
Which sky and ocean smote,
Like one that hath been seven days drown'd
My body lay afloat;
But swift as dreams, myself I found
Within the Pilot's boat.

Upon the whirl, where sank the ship,
The boat spun round and round;
And all was still, save that the hill
Was telling of the sound.

I moved my lips—the Pilot shriek'd,
And fell down in a fit;
The holy Hermit raised his eyes,
And pray'd where he did sit.

I took the oars: the Pilot's boy,
Who now doth crazy go,
Laugh'd loud and long, and all the while
His eyes went to and fro.
"Ha! ha!" quoth he, "full plain I see,
The Devil knows how to row."

And now, all in my own countree,
I stood on the firm land!
The Hermit stepp'd forth from the boat,
And scarcely he could stand.

The ancient Mariner earnestly entreateth the Hermit to shrieve him; and the penance of life falls on him.

"O shrieve me, shrieve me, holy man!"
The Hermit cross'd his brow.
"Say quick," quoth he, "I bid thee say
—What manner of man art thou?"

Forthwith this frame of mine was wrench'd
With a woeful agony,
Which forced me to begin my tale;
And then it left me free.

And ever and anon throughout his future life an agony constraineth him to travel from land to land,

Since then, at an uncertain hour,
That agony returns:
And till my ghastly tale is told,
This heart within me burns.

I pass, like night, from land to land;
I have strange power of speech;
That moment that his face I see,
I know the man that must hear me:
To him my tale I teach.

What loud uproar bursts from that door!
The wedding-guests are there:
But in the garden-bower the bride
And bride-maids singing are:
And hark! the little vesper bell,
Which biddeth me to prayer.

O Wedding-Guest! this soul hath been
Alone on a wide wide sea:
So lonely 't was, that God himself
Scarce seemed there to be.

O sweeter than the marriage-feast,
'T is sweeter far to me,
To walk together to the kirk
With a goodly company!—

To walk together to the kirk,
And all together pray,
While each to his great Father bends,
Old men, and babes, and loving friends,
And youths and maidens gay!

And to teach, by his own example, love and reverence to all things that God made and loveth.

Farewell, farewell! but this I tell
To thee, thou Wedding-Guest!
He prayeth well, who loveth well
Both man and bird and beast.

He prayeth best, who loveth best
All things both great and small;
For the dear God who loveth us,
He made and loveth all.

The Mariner, whose eye is bright,
Whose beard with age is hoar,
Is gone: and now the Wedding-Guest
Turn'd from the bridegroom's door.

He went like one that hath been stunn'd,
And is of sense forlorn:
A sadder and a wiser man
He rose the morrow morn.

Christabel.

PREFACE.[1]

The first part of the following poem was written in the year one thousand seven hundred and ninety seven, at Stowey in the county of Somerset. The second part, after my return from Germany, in the year one thousand eight hundred, at Keswick, Cumberland. Since the latter date, my poetic powers have been, till very lately, in a state of suspended animation. But as, in my very first conception of the tale, I had the whole present to my mind, with the wholeness, no less than with the loveliness of a vision, I trust that I shall yet be able to embody in verse the three parts yet to come.

It is probable, that if the poem had been finished at either of the former periods, or if even the first and second part had been published in the year 1800, the impression of its originality would have been much greater than I dare at present expect. But for this, I have only my own indolence to blame. The dates are mentioned for the exclusive purpose of precluding charges of plagiarism or servile imitation from myself. For there is amongst us a set of critics, who seem to hold, that every possible thought and image is traditional; who have no notion that there are such things as fountains in the world, small as well as great; and who would therefore charitably derive every rill they behold flowing, from a perforation made in some other man's tank. I am confident, however, that as far as the present poem is concerned, the celebrated poets whose writings I might be suspected of having imitated, either in particular passages, or in the tone and the spirit of the whole, would be among the first to vindicate me

[1] To the edition of 1816.

from the charge, and who, on any striking coincidence, would permit me to address them in this doggrel version of two monkish Latin hexameters.

'T is mine and it is likewise your's;
But an if this will not do,
Let it be mine, good friend! for I
Am the poorer of the two.

I have only to add, that the metre of the Christabel is not, properly speaking, irregular, though it may seem so from its being founded on a new principle: namely, that of counting in each line the accents, not the syllables. Though the latter may vary from seven to twelve, yet in each line the accents will be found to be only four. Nevertheless this occasional variation in number of syllables is not introduced wantonly, or for the mere ends of convenience, but in correspondence with some transition, in the nature of the imagery or passion.

CHRISTABEL.

PART I.

'T is the middle of night by the castle clock,
And the owls have awaken'd the crowing cock;
Tu-whit!——Tu whoo!
And hark, again! the crowing cock,
How drowsily it crew.

Sir Leoline, the Baron rich,
Hath a toothless mastiff, which
From her kennel beneath the rock
Maketh answer to the clock,
Four for the quarters, and twelve for the hour;
Ever and aye, by shine and shower,
Sixteen short howls, not over loud:
Some say, she sees my lady's shroud.

Is the night chilly and dark?
The night is chilly, but not dark.
The thin grey cloud is spread on high,
It covers but not hides the sky.
The moon is behind, and at the full;
And yet she looks both small and dull.
The night is chill, the cloud is grey:
'T is a month before the month of May,
And the Spring comes slowly up this way.

The lovely lady, Christabel,
Whom her father loves so well,
What makes her in the wood so late,
A furlong from the castle gate?
She had dreams all yesternight
Of her own betrothed knight;
And she in the midnight wood will pray
For the weal of her lover that 's far away.

She stole along, she nothing spoke,
The sighs she heaved were soft and low,
And nought was green upon the oak,
But moss and rarest mistletoe:
She kneels beneath the huge oak tree,
And in silence prayeth she.

The lady sprang up suddenly,
The lovely lady, Christabel!
It moan'd as near, as near can be,
But what it is, she cannot tell.—
On the other side it seems to be,
Of the huge, broad-breasted, old oak tree.

The night is chill; the forest bare;
Is it the wind that moaneth bleak?
There is not wind enough in the air
To move away the ringlet curl
From the lovely lady's cheek—
There is not wind enough to twirl
The one red leaf, the last of its clan,
That dances as often as dance it can,
Hanging so light, and hanging so high,
On the topmost twig that looks up at the sky.

Hush, beating heart of Christabel!
Jesu, Maria, shield her well!
She folded her arms beneath her cloak,
And stole to the other side of the oak.
What sees she there?

There she sees a damsel bright,
Drest in a silken robe of white,
That shadowy in the moonlight shone:
The neck that made that white robe wan,
Her stately neck, and arms were bare;
Her blue-vein'd feet unsandal'd were,
And wildly glitter'd here and there
The gems entangled in her hair.
I guess, 't was frightful there to see
A lady so richly clad as she—
Beautiful exceedingly!

Mary mother, save me now!
(Said Christabel), And who art thou?
The lady strange made answer meet,
And her voice was faint and sweet:—
Have pity on my sore distress,
I scarce can speak for weariness:
Stretch forth thy hand, and have no fear!
Said Christabel, How camest thou here?
And the lady, whose voice was faint and sweet:
Did thus pursue her answer meet:—

My sire is of a noble line,
And my name is Geraldine:
Five warriors seized me yestermorn,
Me, even me, a maid forlorn:
They choked my cries with force and fright,
And tied me on a palfrey white.
The palfrey was as fleet as wind,
And they rode furiously behind.
They spurr'd amain, their steeds were white;
And once we cross'd the shade of night.
As sure as Heaven shall rescue me,
I have no thought what men they be;
Nor do I know how long it is
(For I have lain entranced I wis)
Since one, the tallest of the five,
Took me from the palfrey's back,
A weary woman, scarce alive.
Some mutter'd words his comrades spoke:
He placed me underneath this oak,

He swore they would return with haste;
Whither they went I cannot tell—
I thought I heard, some minutes past,
Sounds as of a castle bell.
Stretch forth thy hand (thus ended she),
And help a wretched maid to flee.

Then Christabel stretch'd forth her hand
And comforted fair Geraldine:
O well, bright dame! may you command
The service of Sir Leoline;
And gladly our stout chivalry
Will he send forth and friends withall
To guide and guard you safe and free
Home to your noble father's hall.

She rose: and forth with steps they pass'd
That strove to be, and were not, fast.
Her gracious STARS the lady blest,
And thus spake on sweet Christabel:
All our household are at rest,
The hall as silent as the cell;
Sir Leoline is weak in health
And may not well awaken'd be,
But we will move as if in stealth;
And I beseech your courtesy,
This night, to share your couch with me.

They cross'd the moat, and Christabel
Took the key that fitted well;
A little door she opened straight,
All in the middle of the gate;
The gate that was iron'd within and without,
Where an army in battle array had march'd out.
The lady sank, belike through pain,
And Christabel with might and main
Lifted her up, a weary weight,
Over the threshold of the gate:
Then the lady rose again,
And moved, as she were not in pain.

So free from danger, free from fear,
They cross'd the court: right glad they were.
And Christabel devoutly cried
To the lady by her side,
Praise we the Virgin all divine
Who hath rescued thee from thy distress!
Alas, alas! said Geraldine,
I cannot speak for weariness.
So free from danger, free from fear,
They cross'd the court: right glad they were.

Outside her kennel, the mastiff old
Lay fast asleep, in moonshine cold.
The mastiff old did not awake,
Yet she an angry moan did make!
And what can ail the mastiff bitch?
Never till now she utter'd yell
Beneath the eye of Christabel.
Perhaps it is the owlet's scritch:
For what can ail the mastiff bitch?

They pass'd the hall, that echoes still,
Pass as lightly as you will!
The brands were flat, the brands were dying,
Amid their own white ashes lying:

But when the lady pass'd, there came
A tongue of light, a fit of flame;
And Christabel saw the lady's eye,
And nothing else saw she thereby,
Save the boss of the shield of Sir Leoline tall,
Which hung in a murky old niche in the wall.
O softly tread! said Christabel,
My father seldom sleepeth well.

Sweet Christabel her feet doth bare;
And, jealous of the listening air,
They steal their way from stair to stair:
Now in glimmer, and now in gloom—
And now they pass the Baron's room,
As still as death with stifled breath!
And now have reach'd her chamber door;
And now doth Geraldine press down
The rushes of the chamber floor.

The moon shines dim in the open air,
And not a moonbeam enters here.
But they without its light can see
The chamber carved so curiously,
Carved with figures strange and sweet,
All made out of the carver's brain,
For a lady's chamber meet:
The lamp with twofold silver chain
Is fasten'd to an angel's feet.

The silver lamp burns dead and dim;
But Christabel the lamp will trim.
She trimm'd the lamp, and made it bright,
And left it swinging to and fro,
While Geraldine, in wretched plight,
Sank down upon the floor below.
O weary lady, Geraldine,
I pray you, drink this cordial wine!
It is a wine of virtuous powers;
My mother made it of wild flowers.

And will your mother pity me,
Who am a maiden most forlorn?
Christabel answer'd—Woe is me!
She died the hour that I was born.
I have heard the grey-hair'd friar tell,
How on her death-bed she did say,
That she should hear the castle-bell
Strike twelve upon my wedding-day.
O mother dear! that thou wert here!
I would, said Geraldine, she were!

But soon, with alter'd voice, said she—
«Off, wandering mother! Peak and pine!
I have power to bid thee flee.»
Alas! what ails poor Geraldine?
Why stares she with unsettled eye?
Can she the bodiless dead espy?
And why with hollow voice cries she,
«Off, woman, off! this hour is mine—
Though thou her guardian spirit be,
Off, woman, off! 't is given to me.»

Then Christabel knelt by the lady's side,
And raised to heaven her eyes so blue—
Alas! said she, this ghastly ride—
Dear lady! it hath wilder'd you!

The lady wiped her moist cold brow,
And faintly said, «'T is over now!»

Again the wild-flower wine she drank:
Her fair large eyes 'gan glitter bright,
And from the floor whereon she sank,
The lofty lady stood upright;
She was most beautiful to see,
Like a lady of a far countrée.

And thus the lofty lady spake—
All they, who live in the upper sky,
Do love you, holy Christabel!
And you love them, and for their sake
And for the good which me befel,
Even I in my degree will try,
Fair maiden! to requite you well.
But now unrobe yourself; for I
Must pray, ere yet in bed I lie.

Quoth Christabel, so let it be!
And as the lady bade, did she.
Her gentle limbs did she undress,
And lay down in her loveliness.

But through her brain of weal and woe
So many thoughts moved to and fro,
That vain it were her lids to close;
So half-way from the bed she rose,
And on her elbow did recline
To look at the Lady Geraldine.

Beneath the lamp the lady bow'd,
And slowly roll'd her eyes around;
Then drawing in her breath aloud,
Like one that shudder'd, she unbound
The cincture from beneath her breast:
Her silken robe, and inner vest,
Dropt to her feet, and full in view,
Behold! her bosom and half her side—— *
A sight to dream of, not to tell!
O shield her! shield sweet Christabel!

Yet Geraldine nor speaks nor stirs;
Ah! what a stricken look was hers!
Deep from within she seems half-way
To lift some weight with sick assay,
And eyes the maid and seeks delay;
Then suddenly as one defied
Collects herself in scorn and pride,
And lay down by the Maiden's side!—
And in her arms the maid she took,
Ah well-a-day!
And with low voice and doleful look
These words did say:
In the touch of this bosom there worketh a spell,
Which is lord of thy utterance, Christabel!
Thou knowest to-night, and wilt know to-morrow
This mark of my shame, this seal of my sorrow;
But vainly thou warrest,
For this is alone in
Thy power to declare,
That in the dim forest
Thou heardest a low moaning,
And foundest a bright lady, surpassingly fair:
And didst bring her home with thee in love and in charity,
To shield her and shelter her from the damp air.

THE CONCLUSION TO PART I.

It was a lovely sight to see
The lady Christabel, when she
Was praying at the old oak-tree.
Amid the jagged shadows
Of mossy leafless boughs,
Kneeling in the moonlight,
To make her gentle vows;
Her slender palms together prest,
Heaving sometimes on her breast;
Her face resign'd to bliss or bale—
Her face, O call it fair, not pale!
And both blue eyes more bright than clear,
Each about to have a tear.

With open eyes (ah woe is me!)
Asleep, and dreaming fearfully,
Fearfully dreaming, yet I wis,
Dreaming that alone, which is—
O sorrow and shame! Can this be she,
The lady, who knelt at the old oak tree?
And lo! the worker of these harms,
That holds the maiden in her arms,
Seems to slumber still and mild,
As a mother with her child.

A star hath set, a star hath risen,
O Geraldine! since arms of thine
Have been the lovely lady's prison.
O Geraldine! one hour was thine—
Thou 'st had thy will! By tairn and rill,
The night-birds all that hour were still.
But now they are jubilant anew,
From cliff and tower, tu-whoo! tu-whoo!
Tu-whoo! tu-whoo! from wood and fell!

And see! the lady Christabel
Gathers herself from out her trance;
Her limbs relax, her countenance
Grows sad and soft; the smooth thin lids
Close o'er her eyes; and tears she sheds—
Large tears that leave the lashes bright!
And oft the while she seems to smile
As infants at a sudden light!

Yea, she doth smile, and she doth weep,
Like a youthful hermitess,
Beauteous in a wilderness,
Who, praying always, prays in sleep.
And, if she move unquietly,
Perchance, 't is but the blood so free,
Comes back and tingles in her feet.
No doubt, she hath a vision sweet:
What if her guardian spirit 't were,
What if she knew her mother near?
But this she knows, in joys and woes,
That saints will aid if men will call:
For the blue sky bends over all!

* The MS. runs "Behold her bosom & half her side

PART II.

Each matin bell, the Baron saith,
Knells us back to a world of death.
These words Sir Leoline first said,
When he rose and found his lady dead:
These words Sir Leoline will say,
Many a morn to his dying day!

And hence the custom and law began,
That still at dawn the sacristan,
Who duly pulls the heavy bell,
Five-and-forty beads must tell
Between each stroke—a warning knell,
Which not a soul can chuse but hear
From Bratha Head to Wyndermere.

Saith Bracy the bard, So let it knell!
And let the drowsy sacristan
Still count as slowly as he can!
There is no lack of such, I ween,
As well fill up the space between.
In Langdale Pike and Witch's Lair,
And Dungeon-ghyll so foully rent,
With ropes of rock and bells of air
Three sinful sextons' ghosts are pent,
Who all give back, one after t' other,
The death-note to their living brother;
And oft too, by the knell offended,
Just as their one! two! three! is ended,
The devil mocks the doleful tale
With a merry peal from Borrowdale.

The air is still! through mist and cloud
That merry peal comes ringing loud;
And Geraldine shakes off her dread,
And rises lightly from the bed;
Puts on her silken vestments white,
And tricks her hair in lovely plight,
And, nothing doubting of her spell,
Awakens the lady Christabel.
"Sleep you, sweet lady Christabel?
I trust that you have rested well."

And Christabel awoke and spied
The same who lay down by her side—
O rather say, the same whom she
Raised up beneath the old oak-tree!
Nay, fairer yet! and yet more fair!
For she belike hath drunken deep
Of all the blessedness of sleep!
And while she spake, her looks, her air
Such gentle thankfulness declare,
That (so it seem'd) her girded vests
Grew tight beneath her heaving breasts.
"Sure I have sinn'd," said Christabel,
"Now Heaven be praised if all be well!"
And in low faltering tones, yet sweet,
Did she the lofty lady greet
With such perplexity of mind
As dreams too lively leave behind.

So quickly she rose, and quickly array'd
Her maiden limbs, and having pray'd
That He, who on the cross did groan,
Might wash away her sins unknown,
She forthwith led fair Geraldine
To meet her sire, Sir Leoline.

The lovely maid and the lady tall
Are pacing both into the hall,
And, pacing on through page and groom,
Enter the Baron's presence-room.

The Baron rose, and while he prest
His gentle daughter to his breast,
With cheerful wonder in his eyes
The lady Geraldine espies,
And gave such welcome to the same,
As might beseem so bright a dame!

But when he heard the lady's tale,
And when she told her father's name,
Why wax'd Sir Leoline so pale,
Murmuring o'er the name again,
Lord Roland de Vaux of Tryermaine?

Alas! they had been friends in youth;
But whispering tongues can poison truth;
And constancy lives in realms above,
And life is thorny; and youth is vain:
And to be wroth with one we love,
Doth work like madness in the brain.
And thus it chanced, as I divine,
With Roland and Sir Leoline.
Each spake words of high disdain
And insult to his heart's best brother:
They parted—ne'er to meet again!
But never either found another
To free the hollow heart from paining—
They stood aloof, the scars remaining,
Like cliffs which had been rent asunder;
A dreary sea now flows between.
But neither heat, nor frost, nor thunder,
Shall wholly do away, I ween,
The marks of that which once hath been.
Sir Leoline, a moment's space,
Stood gazing on the damsel's face:
And the youthful Lord of Tryermaine
Came back upon his heart again.

O then the Baron forgot his age!
His noble heart swell'd high with rage;
He swore by the wounds in Jesu's side,
He would proclaim it far and wide
With trump and solemn heraldry,
That they, who thus had wrong'd the dame,
Were base as spotted infamy!
"And if they dare deny the same,
My herald shall appoint a week,
And let the recreant traitors seek
My tourney court—that there and then
I may dislodge their reptile souls
From the bodies and forms of men!"
He spake: his eye in lightning rolls!
For the lady was ruthlessly seized; and he kenn'd
In the beautiful lady the child of his friend!

And now the tears were on his face,
And fondly in his arms he took
Fair Geraldine, who met the embrace,
Prolonging it with joyous look.

Which when she view'd, a vision fell
Upon the soul of Christabel,
The vision of fear, the touch and pain!
She shrunk and shudder'd, and saw again—
(Ah, woe is me! Was it for thee,
Thou gentle maid! such sights to see?)

Again she saw that bosom old,
Again she felt that bosom cold,
And drew in her breath with a hissing sound:
Whereat the Knight turn'd wildly round,
And nothing saw but his own sweet maid
With eyes upraised, as one that pray'd.

The touch, the sight, had pass'd away,
And in its stead that vision blest,
Which comforted her after-rest,
While in the lady's arms she lay,
Had put a rapture in her breast,
And on her lips and o'er her eyes
Spread smiles like light!

With new surprise,
"What ails then my beloved child?"
The Baron said—His daughter mild
Made answer, "All will yet be well!"
I ween, she had no power to tell
Aught else: so mighty was the spell.

Yet he, who saw this Geraldine,
Had deem'd her sure a thing divine.
Such sorrow with such grace she blended,
As if she fear'd she had offended
Sweet Christabel, that gentle maid!
And with such lowly tones she pray'd,
She might be sent without delay
Home to her father's mansion.

"Nay!
Nay, by my soul!" said Leoline.
"Ho! Bracy the bard, the charge be thine:
Go thou, with music sweet and loud,
And take two steeds with trappings proud,
And take the youth whom thou lovest best
To bear thy harp, and learn thy song,
And clothe you both in solemn vest,
And over the mountains haste along,
Lest wandering folk, that are abroad,
Detain you on the valley road.
And when he has cross'd the Irthing flood,
My merry bard! he hastes, he hastes
Up Knorren Moor, through Halegarth Wood,
And reaches soon that castle good
Which stands and threatens Scotland's wastes.

"Bard Bracy, bard Bracy! your horses are fleet,
Ye must ride up the hall, your music so sweet,
More loud than your horses' echoing feet!
And loud and loud to Lord Roland call,
Thy daughter is safe in Langdale hall!
Thy beautiful daughter is safe and free—
Sir Leoline greets thee thus through me.
He bids thee come without delay
With all thy numerous array;
And take thy lovely daughter home:
And he will meet thee on the way
With all his numerous array,
White with their panting palfreys' foam:
And by mine honour! I will say,
That I repent me of the day
When I spake words of fierce disdain
To Roland de Vaux of Tryermaine!
—For since that evil hour hath flown,
Many a summer's sun hath shone;
Yet ne'er found I a friend again
Like Roland de Vaux of Tryermaine."

The lady fell, and clasp'd his knees,
Her face upraised, her eyes o'erflowing;
And Bracy replied, with faultering voice,
Her gracious hail on all bestowing;—
Thy words, thou sire of Christabel,
Are sweeter than my harp can tell;
Yet might I gain a boon of thee,
This day my journey should not be,
So strange a dream hath come to me;
That I had vow'd with music loud
To clear yon wood from thing unblest,
Warn'd by a vision in my rest!
For in my sleep I saw that dove,
That gentle bird, whom thou dost love,
And call'st by thy own daughter's name—
Sir Leoline! I saw the same,
Fluttering, and uttering fearful moan,
Among the green herbs in the forest alone.
Which when I saw and when I heard,
I wonder'd what might ail the bird:
For nothing near it could I see,
Save the grass and green herbs underneath the old tree.

And in my dream, methought, I went
To search out what might there be found;
And what the sweet bird's trouble meant,
That thus lay fluttering on the ground.
I went and peer'd, and could descry
No cause for her distressful cry;
But yet for her dear lady's sake
I stoop'd, methought, the dove to take,
When lo! I saw a bright green snake
Coil'd around its wings and neck.
Green as the herbs on which it couch'd,
Close by the dove's its head it crouch'd;
And with the dove it heaves and stirs,
Swelling its neck as she swell'd hers!
I woke; it was the midnight hour,
The clock was echoing in the tower;
But though my slumber was gone by,
This dream it would not pass away—
It seems to live upon my eye!
And thence I vow'd this self-same day,
With music strong and saintly song
To wander through the forest bare,
Lest aught unholy loiter there.

Thus Bracy said: the Baron, the while,
Half-listening heard him with a smile;
Then turn'd to Lady Geraldine,
His eyes made up of wonder and love;
And said in courtly accents fine,
Sweet maid! Lord Roland's beauteous dove,
With arms more strong than harp or song,

Thy sire and I will crush the snake!
He kiss'd her forehead as he spake,
And Geraldine in maiden wise,
Casting down her large bright eyes,
With blushing cheek and courtesy fine
She turn'd her from Sir Leoline;
Softly gathering up her train,
That o'er her right arm fell again;
And folded her arms across her chest,
And couch'd her head upon her breast,
And look'd askance at Christabel——
Jesu, Maria, shield her well!

A snake's small eye blinks dull and shy,
And the lady's eyes they shrunk in her head,
Each shrunk up to a serpent's eye,
And with somewhat of malice, and more of dread,
At Christabel she look'd askance:—
One moment—and the sight was fled!
But Christabel, in dizzy trance
Stumbling on the unsteady ground,
Shudder'd aloud, with a hissing sound;
And Geraldine again turn'd round,
And like a thing, that sought relief,
Full of wonder and full of grief,
She roll'd her large bright eyes divine
Wildly on Sir Leoline.

The maid, alas! her thoughts are gone,
She nothing sees—no sight but one!
The maid, devoid of guile and sin,
I know not how, in fearful wise
So deeply had she drunken in
That look, those shrunken serpent eyes,
That all her features were resigned
To this sole image in her mind:
And passively did imitate
That look of dull and treacherous hate!
And thus she stood, in dizzy trance,
Still picturing that look askance
With forced unconscious sympathy
Full before her father's view——
As far as such a look could be,
In eyes so innocent and blue.
And when the trance was o'er, the maid
Paused awhile, and inly pray'd:
Then falling at the Baron's feet,
«By my mother's soul do I entreat
That thou this woman send away!»
She said: and more she could not say;
For what she knew she could not tell,
O'er-master'd by the mighty spell.

Why is thy cheek so wan and wild,
Sir Leoline? Thy only child
Lies at thy feet, thy joy, thy pride,
So fair, so innocent, so mild;
The same, for whom thy lady died.
O by the pangs of her dear mother,
Think thou no evil of thy child!
For her, and thee, and for no other,
She pray'd the moment ere she died;
Pray'd that the babe for whom she died
Might prove her dear lord's joy and pride!
That prayer her deadly pangs beguiled,
Sir Leoline!
And wouldst thou wrong thy only child,
Her child and thine?

Within the Baron's heart and brain
If thoughts like these had any share,
They only swell'd his rage and pain,
And did but work confusion there.
His heart was cleft with pain and rage,
His cheeks they quiver'd, his eyes were wild,
Dishonour'd thus in his old age;
Dishonour'd by his only child,
And all his hospitality
To the insulted daughter of his friend
By more than woman's jealousy
Brought thus to a disgraceful end—
He roll'd his eye with stern regard
Upon the gentle minstrel bard,
And said in tones abrupt, austere,
Why, Bracy! dost thou loiter here?
I bade thee hence! The bard obey'd;
And, turning from his own sweet maid,
The aged knight, Sir Leoline,
Led forth the lady Geraldine!

THE CONCLUSION TO PART II.

A LITTLE child, a limber elf,
Singing, dancing to itself,
A fairy thing with red round cheeks
That always finds, and never seeks,
Makes such a vision to the sight
As fills a father's eyes with light;
And pleasures flow in so thick and fast
Upon his heart, that he at last
Must needs express his love's excess
With words of unmeant bitterness.
Perhaps 't is pretty to force together
Thoughts so all unlike each other;
To mutter and mock a broken charm,
To dally with wrong that does no harm.
Perhaps 't is tender too and pretty
At each wild word to feel within
A sweet recoil of love and pity.
And what, if in a world of sin
(O sorrow and shame should this be true)!
Such giddiness of heart and brain
Comes seldom save from rage and pain,
So talks as it 's most used to do.

Remorse;

A TRAGEDY, IN FIVE ACTS.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MARQUIS VALDEZ, *Father to the two brothers, and Donna Teresa's Guardian.*
DON ALVAR, *the eldest son.*
DON ORDONIO, *the youngest son.*
MONVIEDRO, *a Dominican and Inquisitor.*
ZULIMEZ, *the faithful attendant on Alvar.*
ISIDORE, *a Moresco Chieftain, ostensibly a Christian.*
FAMILIARS OF THE INQUISITION.
NAOMI.
MOORS, SERVANTS, *etc.*
DONNA TERESA, *an Orphan Heiress.*
ALHADRA, *Wife to Isidore.*

TIME. The reign of Philip II, just at the close of the civil wars against the Moors, and during the heat of the persecution which raged against them, shortly after the edict which forbade the wearing of Moresco apparel under pain of death.

REMORSE.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

The Sea Shore on the Coast of Granada.

DON ALVAR, *wrapt in a Boat-cloak, and* ZULIMEZ *(a Moresco), both as just landed.*

ZULIMEZ.

No sound, no face of joy to welcome us!

ALVAR.

My faithful Zulimez, for one brief moment
Let me forget my anguish and their crimes.
If aught on earth demand an unmix'd feeling,
'T is surely this—after long years of exile,
To step forth on firm land, and gazing round us,
To hail at once our country, and our birth-place.
Hail, Spain! Granada, hail! once more I press
Thy sands with filial awe, land of my fathers!

ZULIMEZ.

Then claim your rights in it! O, revered Don Alvar,
Yet, yet give up your all too gentle purpose.
It is too hazardous! reveal yourself,
And let the guilty meet the doom of guilt!

ALVAR.

Remember, Zulimez! I am his brother:
Injured indeed! O deeply injured! yet
Ordonio's brother.

ZULIMEZ.

Nobly-minded Alvar!
This sure but gives his guilt a blacker dye.

ALVAR.

The more behoves it, I should rouse within him
Remorse! that I should save him from himself.

ZULIMEZ.

Remorse is as the heart in which it grows:
If that be gentle, it drops balmy dews
Of true repentance; but if proud and gloomy,
It is a poison-tree that, pierced to the inmost,
Weeps only tears of poison.

ALVAR.

And of a brother,
Dare I hold this, unproved? nor make one effort
To save him?—Hear me, friend! I have yet to tell thee,
That this same life, which he conspired to take,
Himself once rescued from the angry flood,
And at the imminent hazard of his own.
Add too my oath—

ZULIMEZ.

You have thrice told already
The years of absence and of secrecy,
To which a forced oath bound you; if in truth
A suborn'd murderer have the power to dictate
A binding oath—

ALVAR.

My long captivity
Left me no choice: the very *Wish* too languish'd
With the fond *Hope* that nursed it; the sick babe
Droop'd at the bosom of its famished mother.
But (more than all) Teresa's perfidy;
The assassin's strong assurance, when no interest,
No motive could have tempted him to falsehood:
In the first pangs of his awaken'd conscience,
When with abhorrence of his own black purpose
The murderous weapon, pointed at my breast,
Fell from his palsied hand—

ZULIMEZ.

Heavy presumption!

ALVAR.

It weigh'd not with me—Hark! I will tell thee all;
As we passed by, I bade thee mark the base
Of yonder cliff—

ZULIMEZ.

That rocky seat you mean,
Shaped by the billows?—

ALVAR.

There Teresa met me
The morning of the day of my departure.
We were alone: the purple hue of dawn,
Fell from the kindling east aslant upon us,
And, blending with the blushes on her cheek,
Suffused the tear-drops there with rosy light.
There seemed a glory round us, and Teresa
The angel of the vision! [*Then with agitation.*
Hadst thou seen
How in each motion her most innocent soul
Beam'd forth and brighten'd, thou thyself wouldst tell me,
Guilt is a thing impossible in her!
She must be innocent!

ZULIMEZ (*with a sigh*).

Proceed, my lord!

ALVAR.

A portrait which she had procured by stealth
(For even then it seems her heart foreboded
Or knew Ordonio's moody rivalry),
A portrait of herself with thrilling hand
She tied around my neck, conjuring me
With earnest prayers, that I would keep it sacred
To my own knowledge: nor did she desist,
Till she had won a solemn promise from me,
That (save my own) no eye should e'er behold it
Till my return. Yet this the assassin knew,
Knew that which none but she could have disclosed.

ZULIMEZ.

A damning proof!

ALVAR.

My own life wearied me!
And but for the imperative Voice within,
With mine own hand I had thrown off the burthen.
That Voice, which quell'd me, calm'd me: and I sought
The Belgic states: there join'd the better cause;
And there too fought as one that courted death!
Wounded, I fell among the dead and dying,
In death-like trance: a long imprisonment follow'd.
The fulness of my anguish by degrees
Waned to a meditative melancholy;
And still, the more I mused, my soul became
More doubtful, more perplex'd; and still Teresa,
Night after night, she visited my sleep,
Now as a saintly sufferer, wan and tearful,
Now as a saint in glory beckoning to me!
Yes, still, as in contempt of proof and reason,
I cherish the fond faith that she is guiltless!
Hear then my fix'd resolve: I 'll linger here
In the disguise of a Moresco chieftain.—
The Moorish robes?—

ZULIMEZ.

All, all are in the sea-cave,
Some furlong hence. I bade our mariners
Secrete the boat there.

ALVAR.

Above all, the picture
Of the assassination—

ZULIMEZ.

Be assured
That it remains uninjured.

ALVAR.

Thus disguised,
I will first seek to meet Ordonio's—*wife!*
If possible, alone too. This was her wonted walk,
And this the hour; her words, her very looks
Will acquit her or convict.

ZULIMEZ.

Will they not know you?

ALVAR.

With your aid, friend, I shall unfearingly
Trust the disguise; and as to my complexion,
My long imprisonment, the scanty food,
This scar,—and toil beneath a burning sun,
Have done already half the business for us.
Add too my youth, when last we saw each other.
Manhood has swoln my chest, and taught my voice
A hoarser note—Besides, they think me dead:
And what the mind believes impossible,
The bodily sense is slow to recognize.

ZULIMEZ.

'T is yours, sir, to command; mine to obey.
Now to the cave beneath the vaulted rock,
Where having shaped you to a Moorish chieftain,
I will seek our mariners; and in the dusk
Transport whate'er we need to the small dell
In the Alpuxarras—there where Zagri lived.

ALVAR.

I know it well: it is the obscurest haunt
Of all the mountains— [*Both stand listening.*
Voices at a distance!
Let us away! [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

Enter TERESA *and* VALDEZ.

TERESA.

I hold Ordonio dear; he is your son
And Alvar's brother.

VALDEZ.

Love him for himself,
Nor make the living wretched for the dead.

TERESA.

I mourn that you should plead in vain, Lord Valdez;
But heaven hath heard my vow, and I remain
Faithful to Alvar, be he dead or living.

VALDEZ.

Heaven knows with what delight I saw your loves,
And could my heart's blood give him back to thee
I would die smiling. But these are idle thoughts!
Thy dying father comes upon my soul
With that same look, with which he gave thee to me;
I held thee in my arms a powerless babe,
While thy poor mother with a mute entreaty
Fix'd her faint eyes on mine. Ah not for this,
That I should let thee feed thy soul with gloom,
And with slow anguish wear away thy life,
The victim of a useless constancy.
I must not see thee wretched.

TERESA.

There are woes
Ill barter'd for the garishness of joy!
If it be wretched with an untired eye
To watch those skiey tints, and this green ocean;
Or in the sultry hour beneath some rock,
My hair dishevell'd by the pleasant sea-breeze,
To shape sweet visions, and live o'er again
All past hours of delight! If it be wretched
To watch some bark, and fancy Alvar there,
To go through each minutest circumstance
Of the blest meeting, and to frame adventures
Most terrible and strange, and hear *him* tell them;
[1] (As once I knew a crazy Moorish maid
Who drest her in her buried lover's clothes,
And o'er the smooth spring in the mountain cleft
Hung with her lute, and play'd the self-same tune
He used to play, and listen'd to the shadow
Herself had made)—if this be wretchedness,
And if indeed it be a wretched thing
To trick out mine own death-bed, and imagine
That I had died, died just ere his return!
Then see him listening to my constancy,
Or hover round, as he at midnight oft

[1] Here Valdez bends back, and smiles at her wildness, which Teresa noticing, checks her enthusiasm, and in a soothing half-playful tone and manner, apologizes for her fancy, by the little tale in the parenthesis.

Sits on my grave and gazes at the moon;
Or haply, in some more fantastic mood,
To be in Paradise, and with choice flowers
Build up a bower where he and I might dwell,
And there to wait his coming! O my sire!
My Alvar's sire! if this be wretchedness
That eats away the life, what were it, think you,
If in a most assured reality
He should return, and see a brother's infant
Smile at him from *my* arms?
Oh, what a thought! [*Clasping her forehead.*

VALDEZ.

A thought? even so! mere thought! an empty thought.
The very week he promised his return——

TERESA (*abruptly*).

Was it not then a busy joy? to see him,
After those three years' travels! we had no fears—
The frequent tidings, the ne'er-failing letter,
Almost endear'd his absence! Yet the gladness,
The tumult of our joy! What then if now——

VALDEZ.

O power of youth to feed on pleasant thoughts,
Spite of conviction! I am old and heartless!
Yes, I am old—I have no pleasant fancies—
Hectic and unrefresh'd with rest—

TERESA (*with great tenderness*).

My father!

VALDEZ.

The sober truth is all too much for me!
I see no sail which brings not to my mind
The home-bound bark in which my son was captured
By the Algerine—to perish with his captors!

TERESA.

Oh no! he did not!

VALDEZ.

Captured in sight of land!
From yon hill point, nay, from our castle watch-tower
We might have seen——

TERESA.

His capture, not his death.

VALDEZ.

Alas! how aptly thou forget'st a tale
Thou ne'er didst wish to learn! my brave Ordonio
Saw both the pirate and his prize go down,
In the same storm that baffled his own valour,
And thus twice snatch'd a brother from his hopes:
Gallant Ordonio! (*pauses; then tenderly*). O beloved
Teresa!
Wouldst thou best prove thy faith to generous Alvar,
And most delight his spirit, go, make thou
His brother happy, make his aged father
Sink to the grave in joy.

TERESA.

For mercy's sake,
Press me no more! I have no power to love him.
His proud forbidding eye, and his dark brow,
Chill me like dew damps of the unwholesome night:
My love, a timorous and tender flower,
Closes beneath his touch.

VALDEZ.

You wrong him, maiden!
You wrong him, by my soul! Nor was it well
To character by such unkindly phrases
The stir and workings of that love for you
Which he has toil'd to smother. 'T was not well,
Nor is it grateful in you to forget
His wounds and perilous voyages, and how
With an heroic fearlessness of danger
He roam'd the coast of Afric for your Alvar.
It was not well—You have moved me even to tears.

TERESA.

Oh pardon me, Lord Valdez! pardon me!
It was a foolish and ungrateful speech,
A most ungrateful speech! But I am hurried
Beyond myself, if I but hear of one
Who aims to rival Alvar. Were we not
Born in one day, like twins of the same parent?
Nursed in one cradle? Pardon me, my father!
A six years' absence is a heavy thing,
Yet still the hope survives——

VALDEZ (*looking forward.*)

Hush! 't is Monviedro.

TERESA.

The Inquisitor! on what new scent of blood?

Enter MONVIEDRO *with* ALHADRA.

MONVIEDRO (*having first made his obeisance to* VALDEZ *and* TERESA).

Peace and the truth be with you! Good my Lord,
My present need is with your son.
[*Looking forward.*
We have hit the time. Here comes he! Yes, 't is he.

Enter from the opposite side DON ORDONIO.

My Lord Ordonio, this Moresco woman
(Alhadra is her name) asks audience of you.

ORDONIO.

Hail, reverend father! what may be the business?

MONVIEDRO.

My lord, on strong suspicion of relapse
To his false creed, so recently abjured,
The secret servants of the inquisition
Have seized her husband, and at my command
To the supreme tribunal would have led him,
But that he made appeal to you, my lord,
As surety for his soundness in the faith.
Though lessen'd by experience what small trust
The asseverations of these Moors deserve,
Yet still the deference to Ordonio's name,
Nor less the wish to prove, with what high honour
The Holy Church regards her faithful soldiers,
Thus far prevail'd with me that——

ORDONIO.

Reverend father,
I am much beholden to your high opinion,
Which so o'erprizes my light services.
[*Then to* ALHADRA.
I would that I could serve you; but in truth
Your face is new to me.

MONVIEDRO.

My mind foretold me,
That such would be the event. In truth, Lord Valdez,
'T was little probable, that Don Ordonio,
That your illustrious son, who fought so bravely
Some four years since to quell these rebel Moors,
Should prove the patron of this infidel!
The guarantee of a Moresco's faith!
Now I return.

ALHADRA.

My Lord, my husband's name
Is Isidore. (ORDONIO *starts.*)—You may remember it:

Three years ago, three years this very week,
You left him at Almeria.

MONVIEDRO.

Palpably false!
This very week, three years ago, my lord
(You needs must recollect it by your wound),
You were at sea, and there engaged the pirates,
The *murderers* doubtless of your brother Alvar!

[TERESA *looks at* MONVIEDRO *with disgust and horror.* ORDONIO'S *appearance to be collected from what follows.*

MONVIEDRO (*to* VALDEZ, *and pointing at* ORDONIO).
What! is he ill, my lord? how strange he looks!

VALDEZ (*angrily*).
You press'd upon him too abruptly, father,
The fate of one, on whom, you know, he doted.

ORDONIO (*starting as in sudden agitation*).
O Heavens! *I?—I* doted? (*then recovering himself*).
Yes! I *doted* on him.

[ORDONIO *walks to the end of the stage,* VALDEZ *follows, soothing him.*

TERESA (*her eye following* ORDONIO).
I do not, can not, love him. Is my heart hard?
Is my heart hard? that even now the thought
Should force itself upon me?—Yet I feel it!

MONVIEDRO.
The drops did start and stand upon his forehead!
I will return. In very truth, I grieve
To have been the occasion. Ho! attend me, woman!

ALHADRA (*to* TERESA).
O gentle lady! make the father stay,
Until my lord recover. I am sure,
That he will say he is my husband's friend.

TERESA.
Stay, father! stay! my lord will soon recover.

ORDONIO (*as they return, to* VALDEZ).
Strange, that this Monviedro
Should have the power so to distemper me!

VALDEZ.
Nay, 't was an amiable weakness, son!

MONVIEDRO.
My lord, I truly grieve——

ORDONIO.
Tut! name it not.
A sudden seizure, father! think not of it.
As to this woman's husband, I *do* know him.
I know him well, and that he *is* a Christian.

MONVIEDRO.
I hope, my lord, your merely human pity
Doth not prevail——

ORDONIO.
'T is certain that he *was* a catholic;
What changes may have happen'd in three years,
I cannot say; but grant me this, good father:
Myself I 'll sift him: if I find him sound,
You 'll grant me your authority and name
To liberate his house.

MONVIEDRO.
Your zeal, my lord,
And your late merits in this holy warfare,
Would authorize an ampler trust—you have it.

ORDONIO.
I will attend you home within an hour.

VALDEZ.
Meantime, return with us and take refreshment.

ALHADRA.
Not till my husband 's free! I may not do it.
I will stay here.

TERESA (*aside*).
Who is this Isidore?

VALDEZ.
Daughter!

TERESA.
With your permission, my dear lord,
I 'll loiter yet awhile t' enjoy the sea breeze.

[*Exeunt* VALDEZ, MONVIEDRO, *and* ORDONIO.

ALHADRA.
Hah! there he goes! a bitter curse go with him,
A scathing curse!
(*Then as if recollecting herself, and with a timid look.*)
You hate him, don't you, lady?

TERESA (*perceiving that* ALHADRA *is conscious she has spoken imprudently*).
Oh fear not me! *my* heart is sad for you.

ALHADRA.
These fell inquisitors! these sons of blood!
As I came on, his face so madden'd me,
That ever and anon I clutch'd my dagger
And half unsheathed it——

TERESA.
Be more calm, I pray you.

ALHADRA.
And as he walk'd along the narrow path
Close by the mountain's edge, my soul grew eager;
'T was with hard toil I made myself remember
That his Familiars held my babes and husband.
To have leapt upon him with a tiger's plunge,
And hurl'd him down the rugged precipice,
O, it had been most sweet!

TERESA.
Hush! hush for shame!
Where is your woman's heart?

ALHADRA.
O gentle lady!
You have no skill to guess *my* many wrongs,
Many and strange! Besides (*ironically*), I am a Christian,
And Christians never pardon—'t is their faith!

TERESA.
Shame fall on those who so have shown it to thee!

ALHADRA.
I know that man; 't is well he knows not me.
Five years ago (and he was the prime agent),
Five years ago the holy brethren seized me.

TERESA.
What might your crime be?

ALHADRA.
I was a Moresco!
They cast me, then a young and nursing mother,
Into a dungeon of their prison-house.
Where was no bed, no fire, no ray of light,
No touch, no sound of comfort! The black air,
It was a toil to breathe it! when the door,
Slow opening at the appointed hour, disclosed
One human countenance, the lamp's red flame
Cower'd as it enter'd, and at once sunk down.
Oh miserable! by that lamp to see
My infant quarrelling with the coarse hard bread
Brought daily: for the little wretch was sickly—
My rage had dried away its natural food.
In darkness I remain'd—the dull bell counting,

Which haply told me, that the all-cheering Sun
Was rising on our garden. When I dozed,
My infant's moanings mingled with my slumbers
And waked me.—If you were a mother, lady,
I should scarce dare to tell you, that its noises
And peevish cries so fretted on my brain
That I have struck the innocent babe in anger.

TERESA.

O Heaven! it is too horrible to hear.

ALHADRA.

What was it then to suffer? 'T is most right
That such as you should hear it.—Know you not,
What Nature makes you mourn, she bids you heal?
Great Evils ask great Passions to redress them,
And Whirlwinds fitliest scatter Pestilence.

TERESA.

You were at length released?

ALHADRA.

Yes, at length
I saw the blessed arch of the whole heaven!
'T was the first time my infant smiled. No more—
For if I dwell upon that moment, Lady,
A trance comes on which makes me o'er again
All I then was—my knees hang loose and drag,
And my lip falls with such an idiot laugh,
That you would start and shudder!

TERESA.

But your husband—

ALHADRA.

A month's imprisonment would kill him, Lady.

TERESA.

Alas, poor man!

ALHADRA.

He hath a lion's courage,
Fearless in act, but feeble in endurance;
Unfit for boisterous times, with gentle heart
He worships nature in the hill and valley,
Not knowing what he loves, but loves it all—

Enter ALVAR *disguised as a* MORESCO, *and in Moorish garments.*

TERESA.

Know you that stately Moor?

ALHADRA.

I know him not:
But doubt not he is some Moresco chieftain,
Who hides himself among the Alpuxarras.

TERESA.

The Alpuxarras? Does he know his danger,
So near this seat?

ALHADRA.

He wears the Moorish robes too,
As in defiance of the royal edict.

[ALHADRA *advances to* ALVAR, *who has walked to the back of the stage, near the rocks.* TERESA *drops her veil.*

ALHADRA.

Gallant Moresco! An inquisitor,
Monviedro, of known hatred to our race——

ALVAR (*interrupting her*).

You have mistaken me. I am a Christian.

ALHADRA.

He deems, that we are plotting to ensnare him:
Speak to him, Lady—none can hear *you* speak,
And not believe you innocent of guile.

TERESA.

If aught enforce you to concealment, Sir—

ALHADRA.

He trembles strangely.

[ALVAR *sinks down and hides his face in his robe.*

TERESA.

See, we have disturb'd him.

[*Approaches nearer to him.*

I pray you think us friends—uncowl your face,
For you seem faint, and the night breeze blows healing.
I pray you think us friends!

ALVAR (*raising his head*).

Calm, very calm!
'T is all too tranquil for reality!
And she spoke to me with her innocent voice,
That voice, that innocent voice! She is no traitress!

TERESA.

Let us retire. (*Haughtily to* ALHADRA).

[*They advance to the front of the Stage.*

ALHADRA (*with scorn*).

He is indeed a Christian.

ALVAR (*aside*).

She deems me dead, yet wears no mourning garment!
Why should my brother's—wife—wear mourning garments?

[*To* TERESA.

Your pardon, noble dame! that I disturb'd you:
I had just started from a frightful dream.

TERESA.

Dreams tell but of the past, and yet, 't is said,
They prophesy—

ALVAR.

The Past lives o'er again
In its effects, and to the guilty spirit
The ever-frowning Present is its image.

TERESA.

Traitress! (*Then aside*).
What sudden spell o'ermasters me?
Why seeks he me, shunning the Moorish woman?

[TERESA *looks round uneasily, but gradually becomes attentive as* ALVAR *proceeds in the next speech.*

ALVAR.

I dreamt I had a friend, on whom I leant
With blindest trust, and a betrothed maid,
Whom I was wont to call not mine, but me:
For mine own self seem'd nothing, lacking her.
This maid so idolized that trusted friend
Dishonour'd in my absence, soul and body!
Fear, following guilt, tempted to blacker guilt,
And murderers were suborn'd against my life.
But by my looks, and most impassion'd words,
I roused the virtues that are dead in no man,
Even in the assassins' hearts! they made their terms,
And thank'd me for redeeming them from murder.

ALHADRA.

You are lost in thought: hear him no more, sweet Lady!

TERESA.

From morn to night I am myself a dreamer,
And slight things bring on me the idle mood!
Well, sir, what happen'd then?

ALVAR.

On a rude rock,
A rock, methought, fast by a grove of firs,
Whose thready leaves to the low-breathing gale
Made a soft sound most like the distant ocean,

I stay'd, as though the hour of death were pass'd,
And I were sitting in the world of spirits—
For all things seem'd unreal! There I sate—
The dews fell clammy, and the night descended,
Black, sultry, close! and ere the midnight hour
A storm came on, mingling all sounds of fear,
That woods, and sky, and mountains, seem'd one havoc.
The second flash of lightning show'd a tree
Hard by me, newly scathed. I rose tumultuous:
My soul work'd high, I bared my head to the storm,
And, with loud voice and clamorous agony,
Kneeling I pray'd to the great Spirit that made me,
Pray'd, that REMORSE might fasten on their hearts,
And cling with poisonous tooth, inextricable
As the gored lion's *bite!*

TERESA (*shuddering*).

A fearful curse!

ALHADRA (*fiercely*).

But dreamt you not that you return'd and kill'd them?
Dreamt you of no revenge?

ALVAR (*his voice trembling, and in tones of deep distress*).

She would have died,
Died in her guilt—perchance by her own hands!
And bending o'er her self-inflicted wounds,
I might have met the evil glance of frenzy,
And leapt myself into an unblest grave!
I pray'd for the punishment that cleanses hearts:
For still I loved her!

ALHADRA.

And you dreamt all this?

TERESA.

My soul is full of visions all as wild!

ALHADRA.

There is no room in this heart for puling love tales.

TERESA (*lifts up her veil, and advances to* ALVAR).

Stranger, farewell! I guess not who you are,
Nor why you so address'd your tale to me.
Your mien is noble, and, I own, perplex'd me
With obscure memory of something past,
Which still escaped my efforts, or presented
Tricks of a fancy pamper'd with long wishing.
If, as it sometimes happens, our rude startling
Whilst your full heart was shaping out its dream,
Drove you to this, your not ungentle, wildness—
You have my sympathy, and so farewell!
But if some undiscover'd wrongs oppress you,
And you need strength to drag them into light,
The generous Valdez, and my Lord Ordonio,
Have arm and will to aid a noble sufferer;
Nor shall you want my favourable pleading.

[*Exeunt* TERESA *and* ALHADRA.

ALVAR (*alone*).

'T is strange! It cannot be! *my* Lord Ordonio!
Her Lord Ordonio! Nay, I will not do it!
I cursed him once—and one curse is enough!
How had she look'd, and pale! but not like guilt—
And her calm tones—sweet as a song of mercy!
If the bad spirit retain'd his angel's voice,
Hell scarce were Hell. And why not innocent?
Who meant to murder me, might well cheat her?
But ere she married him, he had stain'd her honour;
Ah! there I am hamper'd. What if this were a lie
Framed by the assassin? Who should tell it *him*,
If it were truth? Ordonio would not tell him.
Yet why one lie? all else, I *know*, was truth.
No start, no jealousy of stirring conscience!
And she referr'd to *me*—fondly, methought!
Could she walk here if she had been a traitress?
Here, where we play'd together in our childhood?
Here, where we plighted vows? where her cold cheek
Received my last kiss, when with suppress'd feelings
She had fainted in my arms? It cannot be!
'T is not in nature! I will die, believing
That I shall meet her where no evil is,
No treachery, no cup dash'd from the lips.
I 'll haunt this scene no more! live she in peace!
Her husband—ay, her *husband!* May this angel
New-mould his canker'd heart! Assist me, Heaven,
That I may pray for my poor guilty brother! [*Exit.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.

A wild and mountainous Country. ORDONIO *and* ISIDORE *are discovered, supposed at a little distance from* ISIDORE'S *house.*

ORDONIO.

Here we may stop: your house distinct in view,
Yet we secured from listeners.

ISIDORE.

Now indeed
My house! and it looks cheerful as the clusters
Basking in sunshine on yon vine-clad rock,
That over-brows it! Patron! Friend! Preserver!
Thrice have you saved my life. Once in the battle
You gave it me: next rescued me from suicide,
When for my follies I was made to wander,
With mouths to feed, and not a morsel for them:
Now, but for you, a dungeon's slimy stones
Had been my bed and pillow.

ORDONIO.

Good Isidore!
Why this to me? It is enough, you know it.

ISIDORE.

A common trick of Gratitude, my lord,
Seeking to ease her own full heart——

ORDONIO.

Enough,
A debt repaid ceases to be a debt.
You have it in your power to serve me greatly.

ISIDORE.

And how, my lord? I pray you to name the thing.
I would climb up an ice-glazed precipice
To pluck a weed you fancied!

ORDONIO (*with embarrassment and hesitation*).

Why—that—Lady—

ISIDORE.

'T is now three years, my lord, since last I saw you:
Have you a son, my lord?

ORDONIO.

O miserable— [*Aside.*
Isidore! you are a man, and know mankind.
I told you what I wish'd—now for the *truth*—
She loved the man you kill'd.

ISIDORE (*looking as suddenly alarmed*).

You jest, my lord?

ORDONIO.

And till his death is proved she will not wed me.

ISIDORE.

You sport with me, my lord?

ORDONIO.

Come, come! this foolery
Lives only in thy looks, thy heart disowns it!

ISIDORE.

I can bear this, and any thing more grievous
From you, my lord—but how can I serve you here!

ORDONIO.

Why, you can utter with a solemn gesture
Oracular sentences of deep no-meaning,
Wear a quaint garment, make mysterious antics—

ISIDORE.

I am dull, my lord! I do not comprehend you.

ORDONIO.

In blunt terms, you can play the sorcerer.
She hath no faith in Holy Church, 't is true:
Her lover school'd her in some newer nonsense!
Yet still a tale of spirits works upon her.
She is a lone enthusiast, sensitive,
Shivers, and can not keep the tears in her eye:
And such do love the marvellous too well
Not to believe it. We will wind up her fancy
With a strange music, that she knows not of—
With fumes of frankincense, and mummery,
Then leave, as one sure token of his death,
That portrait, which from off the dead man's neck
I bade thee take, the trophy of thy conquest.

ISIDORE.

Will that be a sure sign?

ORDONIO.

Beyond suspicion.
Fondly caressing him, her favour'd lover
(By some base spell he had bewitch'd her senses),
She whisper'd such dark fears of me, forsooth,
As made this heart pour gall into my veins.
And as she coyly bound it round his neck,
She made him promise silence; and now holds
The secret of the existence of this portrait,
Known only to her lover and herself.
But I had traced her, stolen unnoticed on them,
And unsuspected saw and heard the whole.

ISIDORE.

But now I should have cursed the man who told me
You could ask aught, my lord, and I refuse—
But this I can not do.

ORDONIO.

Where lies your scruple?

ISIDORE (*with stammering*).

Why—why, my lord!
You know you told me that the lady loved you,
Had loved you with *incautious* tenderness;
That if the young man, her betrothed husband,
Returned, yourself, and she, and the honour of both
Must perish. Now, though with no tenderer scruples
Than those which being *native* to the heart,
Than those, my lord, which merely being a man—

ORDONIO (*aloud, though to express his contempt he speaks in the third person*).

This fellow is a Man—he kill'd for hire
One whom he knew not, yet has tender scruples!
[*Then turning to* ISIDORE.
These doubts, these fears, thy whine, thy stammering—
Pish, fool! thou blunder'st through the book of guilt,
Spelling thy villany.

ISIDORE.

My lord—my lord,
I can bear much—yes, very much from you!
But there's a point where sufferance is meanness:
I am no villain—never kill'd for hire—
My gratitude——

ORDONIO.

O ay—your gratitude!
'T was a well-sounding word—what have you done with it?

ISIDORE.

Who proffers his past favours for my virtue—

ORDONIO (*with bitter scorn*).

Virtue!——

ISIDORE.

Tries to o'erreach me—is a very sharper,
And should not speak of gratitude, my lord.
I knew not 't was your brother!

ORDONIO (*alarmed*).

And who told you?

ISIDORE.

He himself told me.

ORDONIO.

Ha! you talk'd with him!
And those, the two Morescoes who were with you?

ISIDORE.

Both fell in a night brawl at Malaga.

ORDONIO (*in a low voice*).

My brother—

ISIDORE.

Yes, my lord, I could not tell you!
I thrust away the thought—it drove me wild.
But listen to me now—I pray you listen——

ORDONIO.

Villain! no more. I 'll hear no more of it.

ISIDORE.

My lord, it much imports your future safety
That you should hear it.

ORDONIO (*turning off from* ISIDORE).

Am not *I* a Man!
'T is as it should be! tut—the deed itself
Was idle, and these after-pangs still idler!

ISIDORE.

We met him in the very place you mention'd.
Hard by a grove of firs—

ORDONIO.

Enough—enough—

ISIDORE.

He fought us valiantly, and wounded all;
In fine, compell'd a parley.

ORDONIO (*sighing, as if lost in thought*).

Alvar! brother!

ISIDORE.

He offer'd me his purse—

ORDONIO (*with eager suspicion*).

Yes?

ISIDORE (*indignantly*).

Yes—I spurn'd it.—
He promised us I know not what—in vain!
Then with a look and voice that overawed me,
He said, What mean you, friends? My life is dear:
I have a brother and a promised wife,
Who make life dear to me—and if I fall,
That brother will roam earth and hell for vengeance.
There was a likeness in his face to yours;
I ask'd his brother's name: he said—Ordonio,

Son of Lord Valdez! I had well nigh fainted.
At length I said (if that indeed *I* said it,
And that no Spirit made my tongue its organ),
That woman is dishonour'd by that brother,
And he the man who sent us to destroy you.
He drove a thrust at me in rage. I told him,
He wore her portrait round his neck. He look'd
As he had been made of the rock that propt his back—
Ay, just as you look now—only less ghastly!
At length, recovering from his trance, he threw
His sword away, and bade us take his life,
It was not worth his keeping.

ORDONIO.

And you kill'd him?
Oh blood-hounds! may eternal wrath flame round you!
He was his Maker's Image undefaced? [*A pause.*
It seizes me—by Hell I will go on!
What—wouldst thou stop, man? thy pale looks won't save thee! [*A pause.*
Oh cold—cold—cold! shot through with icy cold!

ISIDORE (*aside*).

Were he alive he had return'd ere now—
The consequence the same—dead through his plotting!

ORDONIO.

O this unutterable dying away—here—
This sickness of the heart! [*A pause.*
What if I went
And lived in a hollow tomb, and fed on weeds?
Ay! that's the road to heaven! O fool! fool! fool!
[*A pause.*
What have I done but that which nature destined,
Or the blind elements stirr'd up within me?
If good were meant, why were we made these Beings?
And if not meant—

ISIDORE.

You are disturb'd, my lord!

ORDONIO (*starts, looks at him wildly; then, after a pause, during which his features are forced into a smile*).

A gust of the soul! i' faith, it overset me.
O 't was all folly—all! idle as laughter!
Now, Isidore! I swear that thou shalt aid me.

ISIDORE (*in a low voice*).

I 'll perish first!

ORDONIO.

What dost thou mutter of?

ISIDORE.

Some of your servants know me, I am certain.

ORDONIO.

There 's some sense in that scruple; but we'll mask you.

ISIDORE.

They 'll know my gait: but stay! last night I watch'd
A stranger near the ruin in the wood,
Who as it seem'd was gathering herbs and wild flowers.
I had follow'd him at distance, seen him scale
Its western wall, and by an easier entrance
Stole after him unnoticed. There I mark'd,
That, 'mid the chequer-work of light and shade,
With curious choice he pluck'd no other flowers
But those on which the moonlight fell: and once
I heard him muttering o'er the plant. A wizard—
Some gaunt slave prowling here for dark employment.

ORDONIO.

Doubtless you question'd him?

ISIDORE.

'T was my intention,
Having first traced him homeward to his haunt.
But lo! the stern Dominican, whose spies
Lurk every where, already (as it seem'd)
Had given commission to his apt familiar
To seek and sound the Moor; who now returning,
Was by this trusty agent stopped midway.
I, dreading fresh suspicion if found near him
In that lone place, again conceal'd myself,
Yet within hearing. So the Moor was question'd,
And in *your* name, as lord of this domain,
Proudly he answer'd, «Say to the Lord Ordonio,
He that can bring the dead to life again!»

ORDONIO.

A strange reply!

ISIDORE.

Ay, all of him is strange.
He call'd himself a Christian, yet he wears
The Moorish robes, as if he courted death.

ORDONIO.

Where does this wizard live?

ISIDORE (*pointing to the distance*).

You see that brooklet?
Trace its course backward: through a narrow opening
It leads you to the place.

ORDONIO.

How shall I know it?

ISIDORE.

You cannot err. It is a small green dell
Built all around with high off-sloping hills,
And from its shape our peasants aptly call it
The Giant's Cradle. There 's a lake in the midst,
And round its banks tall wood that branches over,
And makes a kind of faery forest grow
Down in the water. At the further end
A puny cataract falls on the lake;
And there, a curious sight! you see its shadow
For ever curling like a wreath of smoke,
Up through the foliage of those faery trees.
His cot stands opposite. You cannot miss it.

ORDONIO (*in retiring stops suddenly at the edge of the scene, and then turning round to* ISIDORE).

Ha!—Who lurks there? Have we been overheard?
There, where the smooth high wall of slate-rock glitters—

ISIDORE.

'Neath those tall stones, which, propping each the other,
Form a mock portal with their pointed arch!
Pardon my smiles! 'T is a poor Idiot Boy,
Who sits in the sun, and twirls a bough about,
His weak eyes seeth'd in most unmeaning tears.
And so he sits, swaying his cone-like head;
And, staring at his bough from morn to sun-set,
See-saws his voice in inarticulate noises!

ORDONIO.

'T is well! and now for this same Wizard's Lair.

ISIDORE.

Some three strides up the hill, a mountain ash
Stretches its lower boughs and scarlet clusters
O'er the old thatch.

ORDONIO.

I shall not fail to find it.

[*Exeunt* ORDONIO *and* ISIDORE.

SCENE II.

The inside of a Cottage, around which Flowers and Plants of various kinds are seen. Discovers ALVAR, ZULIMEZ, *and* ALHADRA, *as on the point of leaving.*

ALHADRA (*addressing* ALVAR).

Farewell, then! and though many thoughts perplex me,
Aught evil or ignoble never can I
Suspect of thee! If what thou seem'st thou art,
The oppressed brethren of thy blood have need
Of such a leader.

ALVAR.

Nobly-minded woman!
Long time against oppression have I fought,
And for the native liberty of faith
Have bled and suffer'd bonds. Of this be certain:
Time, as he courses onward, still unrolls
The volume of Concealment. In the Future,
As in the optician's glassy cylinder,
The indistinguishable blots and colours
Of the dim Past collect and shape themselves,
Upstarting in their own completed image
To scare or to reward.
I sought the guilty,
And what I sought I found: but ere the spear
Flew from my hand, there rose an angel form
Betwixt me and my aim. With baffled purpose
To the Avenger I leave Vengeance, and depart!

Whate'er betide, if aught my arm may aid,
Or power protect, my word is pledged to thee:
For many are thy wrongs, and thy soul noble.
Once more farewell.

[*Exit* ALHADRA.

Yes, to the Belgic states
We will return. These robes, this stain'd complexion,
Akin to falsehood, weigh upon my spirit.
Whate'er befall us, the heroic Maurice
Will grant us an asylum, in remembrance
Of our past services.

ZULIMEZ.

And all the wealth, power, influence which is yours,
You let a murderer hold?

ALVAR.

O faithful Zulimez!
That my return involved Ordonio's death,
I trust, would give me an unmingled pang,
Yet bearable:—but when I see my father
Strewing his scant grey hairs, e'en on the ground,
Which soon must be his grave, and my Teresa—
Her husband proved a murderer, and *her* infants,
His infants—poor Teresa!—all would perish,
All perish—all! and I (nay bear with me)
Could not survive the complicated ruin!

ZULIMEZ (*much affected*).

Nay now! I have distress'd you—you well know,
I ne'er will quit your fortunes. True, 't is tiresome!
You are a painter,[1] one of many fancies!
You can call up past deeds, and make them live
On the blank canvas! and each little herb,
That grows on mountain bleak, or tangled forest,
You have learnt to name——
Hark! heard you not some footsteps?

[1] Vide Appendix, Note 1.

ALVAR.

What if it were my brother coming onwards?
I sent a most mysterious message to him.

Enter ORDONIO.

ALVAR (*starting*).

It is he!

ORDONIO (*to himself as he enters*).

If I distinguish'd right her gait and stature,
It was the Moorish woman, Isidore's wife,
That pass'd me as I enter'd. A lit taper,
In the night air, doth not more naturally
Attract the night flies round it, than a conjuror
Draws round him the whole female neighbourhood.
[*Addressing* ALVAR.
You know my name, I guess, if not my person.
I am Ordonio, son of the Lord Valdez.

ALVAR (*with deep emotion*).

The Son of Valdez!

[ORDONIO *walks leisurely round the room, and looks attentively at the plants.*

ZULIMEZ (*to* ALVAR).

Why, what ails you now?
How your hand trembles! Alvar, speak! what wish you

ALVAR.

To fall upon his neck and weep forgiveness!

ORDONIO (*returning, and aloud*).

Pluck'd in the moonlight from a ruin'd abbey—
Those only, which the pale rays visited!
O the unintelligible power of weeds,
When a few odd prayers have been mutter'd o'er them:
Then they work miracles! I warrant you,
There 's not a leaf, but underneath it lurks
Some serviceable imp.
There 's one of you
Hath sent me a strange message.

ALVAR.

I am he.

ORDONIO.

With you, then, I am to speak:
[*Haughtily waving his hand to* ZULIMEZ.
And, mark you, alone. [*Exit* ZULIMEZ.
"He that can bring the dead to life again!"—
Such was your message, Sir! You are no dullard,
But one that strips the outward rind of things!

ALVAR.

'T is fabled there are fruits with tempting rinds,
That are all dust and rottenness within.
Wouldst thou I should strip such?

ORDONIO.

Thou quibbling fool,
What dost thou mean? Think'st thou I journeyed hither,
To sport with thee?

ALVAR.

O no, my lord! to sport
Best suits the gaiety of innocence.

ORDONIO (*aside*).

O what a thing is man! the wisest heart
A Fool! a Fool that laughs at its own folly,
Yet still a fool! [*Looks round the Cottage.*
You are poor!

ALVAR.

What follows thence?

ORDONIO.

That you would fain be richer.

The Inquisition, too—You comprehend me?
You are poor, in peril. I have wealth and power,
Can quench the flames, and cure your poverty:
And for the boon I ask of you, but this,
That you should serve me—once—for a few hours.

ALVAR (*solemnly*).

Thou art the son of Valdez! would to Heaven
That I could truly and for ever serve thee.

ORDONIO.

The slave begins to soften. [*Aside.*
You are my friend,
« He that can bring the dead to life again,»
Nay, no defence to me! The holy brethren
Believe these calumnies—I know thee better.
(*Then with great bitterness.*)
Thou art a man, and as a man I 'll trust thee!

ALVAR (*aside*).

Alas! this hollow mirth—Declare your business.

ORDONIO.

I love a lady, and she would love me,
But for an idle and fantastic scruple.
Have you no servants here, no listeners?
[ORDONIO *steps to the door.*

ALVAR.

What, faithless too? False to his angel wife?
To such a wife? Well mightst thou look so wan,
Ill-starr'd Teresa!—Wretch! my softer soul
Is pass'd away, and I will probe his conscience!

ORDONIO.

In truth this lady loved another man,
But he has perish'd.

ALVAR.

What! you kill'd him? hey?

ORDONIO.

I'll dash thee to the earth, if thou but think'st it!
Insolent slave! how daredst thou—
[*Turns abruptly from* ALVAR, *and then to himself.*
Why! what 's this?
'T was idiotcy! I 'll tie myself to an aspen,
And wear a fool's cap—

ALVAR (*watching his agitation*).

Fare thee well—
I pity thee, Ordonio, even to anguish.
[ALVAR *is retiring.*

ORDONIO (*having recovered himself*).

Ho! [*Calling to* ALVAR.

ALVAR.

Be brief: what wish you?

ORDONIO.

You are deep at bartering—You charge yourself
At a round sum. Come, come, I spake unwisely.

ALVAR.

I listen to you.

ORDONIO.

In a sudden tempest,
Did Alvar perish—he, I mean—the lover—
The fellow,——

ALVAR.

Nay, speak out! 't will ease your heart

ORDONIO.

To call him villain!—Why stand'st thou aghast!
Men think it natural to hate their rivals.

ORDONIO (*hesitating*).

Now, till she knows him dead, she will not wed me.

ALVAR (*with eager vehemence*).

Are you not wedded then? Merciful Heaven!
Not wedded to Teresa?

ORDONIO.

Why what ails thee?
What, art thou mad? why look'st thou upward so?
Dost pray to Lucifer, Prince of the Air?

ALVAR (*recollecting himself*).

Proceed, I shall be silent.
[ALVAR *sits, and leaning on the table, hides his face.*

ORDONIO.

To *Teresa?*
Politic wizard! ere you sent that message,
You had conn'd your lesson, made yourself proficient
In all my fortunes. Hah! you prophesied
A golden crop! Well, you have not mistaken—
Be faithful to me and I 'll pay thee nobly.

ALVAR (*lifting up his head*).

Well! and this lady?

ORDONIO.

If we could make her certain of his death,
She needs must wed me. Ere her lover left her,
She tied a little portrait round his neck,
Entreating him to wear it.

ALVAR (*sighing*).

Yes! he did so!

ORDONIO.

Why no: he was afraid of accidents,
Of robberies, and shipwrecks, and the like.
In secrecy he gave it me to keep,
Till his return.

ALVAR.

What! he was your friend then!

ORDONIO (*wounded and embarrassed*).

I was his friend.—
Now that he gave it me
This lady knows not. You are a mighty wizard—
Can call the dead man up—he will not come—
He is in heaven then—there you have no influence:
Still there are tokens—and your imps may bring you
Something he wore about him when he died.
And when the smoke of the incense on the altar
Is pass'd, your spirits will have left this picture.
What say you now?

ALVAR (*after a pause*).

Ordonio, I will do it.

ORDONIO.

We 'll hazard no delay. Be it to-night,
In the early evening. Ask for the Lord Valdez.
I will prepare him. Music too, and incense
(For I have arranged it—Music, Altar, Incense),
All shall be ready. Here is this same picture,
And here, what you will value more, a purse.
Come early for your magic cercmonics.

ALVAR.

I will not fail to meet you.

ORDONIO.

Till next we meet, farewell!
[*Exit* ORDONIO.

ALVAR (*alone, indignantly flings the purse away, and gazes passionately at the portrait*).

And I did curse thee?
At midnight? on my knees? and I believed
Thee perjured, *thee* a traitress! *Thee* dishonour'd?
O blind and credulous fool! O guilt of folly!
Should not thy *inarticulate* Fondnesses,
Thy *Infant* Loves—should not thy *Maiden* Vows
Have come upon my heart? And this sweet Image,
Tied round my neck with many a chaste endearment,

And thrilling hands, that made me weep and tremble—
Ah, coward dupe! to yield it to the miscreant,
Who spake pollution of thee! barter for Life
This farewell Pledge, which with impassion'd Vow
I had sworn that I would grasp—ev'n in my death-pang!

I am unworthy of thy love, Teresa,
Of that unearthly smile upon those lips,
Which ever smiled on me! Yet do not scorn me—
I lisp'd thy name, ere I had learnt my mother's.

Dear Portrait! rescued from a traitor's keeping,
I will not now profane thee, holy Image,
To a dark trick. That worst bad man shall find
A picture, which will wake the hell within him,
And rouse a fiery whirlwind in his conscience.

ACT III.

SCENE I.

A Hall of Armoury, with an Altar at the back of the Stage. Soft Music from an instrument of Glass or Steel.

VALDEZ, ORDONIO, *and* ALVAR *in a Sorcerer's robe, are discovered.*

ORDONIO.

This was too melancholy, Father.

VALDEZ.

Nay,
My Alvar loved sad music from a child.
Once he was lost; and after weary search
We found him in an open place in the wood,
To which spot he had follow'd a blind boy,
Who breathed into a pipe of sycamore
Some strangely moving notes: and these, he said,
Were taught him in a dream. Him we first saw
Stretch'd on the broad top of a sunny heath-bank:
And lower down poor Alvar, fast asleep,
His head upon the blind boy's dog. It pleased me
To mark how he had fasten'd round the pipe
A silver toy his grandam had late given him.
Methinks I see him now as he then look'd—
Even so!—He had outgrown his infant dress,
Yet still he wore it.

ALVAR.

My tears must not flow!
I must not clasp his knees, and cry, My father!

Enter TERESA, *and Attendants.*

TERESA.

Lord Valdez, you have asked my presence here,
And I submit; but (Heaven bear witness for me)
My heart approves it not! 't is mockery.

ORDONIO.

Believe you then no preternatural influence?
Believe you not that spirits throng around us?

TERESA.

Say rather that I have imagined it
A possible thing: and it has soothed my soul
As other fancies have; but ne'er seduced me
To traffic with the black and frenzied hope
That the dead hear the voice of witch or wizard.
(*To* ALVAR). Stranger, I mourn and blush to see you here,
On such employment! With far other thoughts
I left you.

ORDONIO (*aside*).

Ha! he has been tampering with her?

ALVAR.

O high-soul'd Maiden! and more dear to me
Than suits the *Stranger's* name!—
I swear to thee
I will uncover all concealed guilt.
Doubt, but decide not! Stand ye from the altar.

[*Here a strain of music is heard from behind the scene.*

ALVAR.

With no irreverent voice or uncouth charm
I call up the Departed!
Soul of Alvar!
Hear our soft suit, and heed my milder spell:
So may the Gates of Paradise, unbarr'd,
Cease thy swift toils! Since haply thou art one
Of that innumerable company
Who in broad circle, lovelier than the rainbow,
Girdle this round earth in a dizzy motion,
With noise too vast and constant to be heard:
Fitliest unheard! For oh, ye numberless
And rapid travellers! what ear unstunn'd,
What sense unmadden'd, might bear up against
The rushing of your congregated wings?

[*Music.*

Even now your living wheel turns o'er my head!

[*Music expressive of the movements and images that follow.*

Ye, as ye pass, toss high the desert Sands,
That roar and whiten, like a burst of waters,
A sweet appearance, but a dread illusion
To the parch'd caravan that roams by night!
And ye build upon the becalmed waves
That whirling pillar, which from Earth to Heaven
Stands vast, and moves in blackness! Ye too split
The ice mount! and with fragments many and huge
Tempest the new-thaw'd sea, whose sudden gulfs
Suck in, perchance, some Lapland wizard's skiff!
Then round and round the whirlpool's marge ye dance,
Till from the blue swoln Corse the Soul toils out,
And joins your mighty Army.

[*Here behind the scenes a voice sings the three words, "Hear, Sweet Spirit."*

Soul of Alvar!
Hear the mild spell, and tempt no blacker Charm!
By sighs unquiet, and the sickly pang
Of a half dead, yet still undying Hope,
Pass visible before our mortal sense!
So shall the Church's cleansing rites be thine,
Her knells and masses that redeem the Dead!

SONG.

Behind the Scenes, accompanied by the same Instrument as before.

Hear, sweet spirit, hear the spell,
Lest a blacker charm compel!
So shall the midnight breezes swell
With thy deep long-lingering knell.

And at evening evermore,
In a Chapel on the shore,
Shall the Chaunters sad and saintly,
Yellow tapers burning faintly,

Doleful Masses chaunt for thee,
Miserere Domine!

Hark! the cadence dies away
On the yellow moonlight sea:
The boatmen rest their oars and say,
Miserere Domine! [*A long pause.*

ORDONIO.

The innocent obey nor charm nor spell!
My brother is in heaven. Thou sainted spirit,
Burst on our sight, a passing visitant!
Once more to hear thy voice, once more to see thee,
O 't were a joy to me!

ALVAR.

A joy to thee!
What if thou heard'st him now? What if his spirit
Re-enter'd its cold corse, and came upon thee
With many a stab from many a murderer's poniard?
What if (his stedfast Eye still beaming Pity
And Brother's love) he turn'd his head aside,
Lest he should look at thee, and with one look
Hurl thee beyond all power of Penitence?

VALDEZ.

These are unholy fancies!

ORDONIO (*struggling with his feelings*).

Yes, my father,
He is in Heaven!

ALVAR (*still to* ORDONIO).

But what if he had a brother,
Who had lived even so, that at his dying hour,
The name of Heaven would have convulsed his face,
More than the death-pang?

VALDEZ.

Idly prating man!
Thou hast guess'd ill: Don Alvar's only brother
Stands here before thee—a father's blessing on him!
He is most virtuous.

ALVAR (*still to* ORDONIO).

What, if his very virtues
Had pamper'd his swoln heart and made him proud?
And what if Pride had duped him into guilt?
Yet still he stalk'd a self-created God,
Not very bold, but exquisitely cunning;
And one that at his Mother's looking-glass
Would force his features to a frowning sternness?
Young Lord! I tell thee, that there are such Beings—
Yea, and it gives fierce merriment to the damn'd,
To see these most proud men, that loath mankind,
At every stir and buzz of coward conscience,
Trick, cant, and lie, most whining hypocrites!
Away, away! Now let me hear more music.
[*Music again.*

TERESA.

'T is strange, I tremble at my own conjectures!
But whatsoe'er it mean, I dare no longer
Be present at these lawless mysteries,
This dark Provoking of the Hidden Powers!
Already I affront—if not high Heaven—
Yet Alvar's Memory!—Hark! I make appeal
Against the unholy rite, and hasten hence
To bend before a lawful shrine, and seek
That voice which whispers, when the still heart listens,
Comfort and faithful Hope! Let us retire.

ALVAR (*to* TERESA, *anxiously*).

O full of faith and guileless love, thy Spirit
Still prompts thee wisely. Let the pangs of guilt
Surprise the guilty: thou art innocent!
[*Exeunt* TERESA *and Attendant.*
(*Music as before*).
The spell is mutter'd—Come, thou wandering Shape,
Who own'st no Master in a human eye,
Whate'er be this man's doom, fair be it, or foul;
If he be dead, O come! and bring with thee
That which he grasp'd in death! But if he live,
Some token of his obscure perilous life.
[*The whole Music clashes into a Chorus.*

CHORUS.

Wandering Demons, hear the spell!
Lest a blacker charm compel—
[*The incense on the altar takes fire suddenly, and an illuminated picture of* ALVAR'S *assassination is discovered, and having remained a few seconds is then hidden by ascending flames.*

ORDONIO (*starting in great agitation*).

Duped! duped! duped!—the traitor Isidore!
[*At this instant the doors are forced open,* MONVIEDRO *and the Familiars of the Inquisition, Servants, etc. enter and fill the stage.*

MONVIEDRO.

First seize the sorcerer! suffer him not to speak!
The holy judges of the Inquisition
Shall hear his first words.—Look you pale, Lord Valdez?
Plain evidence have we here of most foul sorcery.
There is a dungeon underneath this castle,
And as you hope for mild interpretation,
Surrender instantly the keys and charge of it.

ORDONIO (*recovering himself as from stupor, to Servants.*)

Why haste you not? Off with him to the dungeon!
[*All rush out in tumult.*

SCENE II.

Interior of a Chapel, with painted Windows.

Enter TERESA.

TERESA.

When first I entered this pure spot, forebodings
Press'd heavy on my heart: but as I knelt,
Such calm unwonted bliss possess'd my spirit,
A trance so cloudless, that those sounds, hard by,
Of trampling uproar fell upon mine ear
As alien and unnoticed as the rain-storm
Beats on the roof of some fair banquet-room,
While sweetest melodies are warbling——

Enter VALDEZ.

VALDEZ.

Ye pitying saints, forgive a father's blindness,
And extricate us from this net of peril!

TERESA.

Who wakes anew my fears, and speaks of peril?

VALDEZ.

O best Teresa, wisely wert thou prompted!
This was no feat of mortal agency!
That picture—Oh, that picture tells me all!
With a flash of light it came, in flames it vanish'd,
Self-kindled, self-consumed: bright as thy Life,
Sudden and unexpected as thy Fate,
Alvar! My son! My son!—The Inquisitor—

TERESA.

Torture me not! But Alvar—Oh of Alvar?

VALDEZ.

How often would he plead for these Morescoes!
The brood accurst! remorseless, coward murderers!

TERESA (*wildly*).

So? so?—I comprehend you—He is——

VALDEZ (*with averted countenance*).

He is no more!

TERESA.

O sorrow! that a father's voice should say this,
A father's heart believe it!

VALDEZ.

A worse sorrow
Are Fancy's wild hopes to a heart despairing!

TERESA.

These rays that slant in through those gorgeous windows,
From yon bright orb—though colour'd as they pass,
Are they not Light?—Even so that voice, Lord Valdez!
Which whispers to my soul, though haply varied
By many a Fancy, many a wishful hope,
Speaks yet the truth: and Alvar lives for me!

VALDEZ.

Yes, for three wasting years, thus and no other,
He has lived for thee—a spirit for thy spirit!
My child, we must not give religious faith
To every voice which makes the heart a listener
To its own wish.

TERESA.

I breathed to the Unerring
Permitted prayers. Must those remain unanswer'd,
Yet impious sorcery, that holds no commune
Save with the lying Spirit, claim belief?

VALDEZ.

O not to day, not now for the first time
Was Alvar lost to thee—

[*Turning off, aloud, but yet as to himself.*

Accurst assassins!
Disarm'd, o'erpower'd, despairing of defence,
At his bared breast he seem'd to grasp some relict
More dear than was his life——

TERESA (*with a faint shriek*).

O Heavens! *my* portrait!
And he *did* grasp it in his death-pang!
Off, false Demon,
That beat'st thy black wings close above my head!

[ORDONIO *enters with the keys of the dungeon in his hand.*

Hush! who comes here? The wizard Moor's employer!
Moors were his murderers, you say? Saints shield us
From wicked thoughts——

[VALDEZ *moves towards the back of the stage to meet* ORDONIO, *and during the concluding lines of* TERESA's *speech appears as eagerly conversing with him.*

Is Alvar dead? what then?
The nuptial rites and funeral shall be one!
Here's no abiding-place for thee, Teresa.—
Away! they see me not—*Thou* seest me, Alvar!
To thee I bend my course.—But first one question,
One question to Ordonio.—My limbs tremble—
There I may sit unmark'd—a moment will restore me.

[*Retires out of sight.*

ORDONIO (*as he advances with* VALDEZ).

These are the dungeon keys. Monviedro knew not
That I too had received the wizard message,
« He that can bring the dead to life again.»
But now he is satisfied, I plann'd this scheme
To work a full conviction on the culprit,
And he entrusts him wholly to my keeping.

VALDEZ.

'T is well, my son! But have you yet discover'd
Where is Teresa? what those speeches meant—
Pride, and Hypocrisy, and Guilt, and Cunning?
Then when the wizard fix'd his eye on you,
And you, I know not why, look'd pale and trembled—
Why—why, what ails you now?—

ORDONIO (*confused*).

Me? what ails me?
A pricking of the blood—It might have happen'd
At any other time.—Why scan you me?

VALDEZ.

His speech about the corse, and stabs and murderers,
Bore reference to the assassins——

ORDONIO.

Duped! duped! duped!
The traitor, Isidore! [*A pause; then wildly.*
I tell thee, my dear father!
I am most glad of this.

VALDEZ (*confused*).

True—Sorcery
Merits its doom; and this perchance may guide us
To the discovery of the murderers,
I have their statures and their several faces
So present to me, that but once to meet them
Would be to recognize.

ORDONIO.

Yes! yes! we recognize them.
I was benumb'd, and stagger'd up and down
Through darkness without light—dark—dark—dark!
My flesh crept chill, my limbs felt manacled,
As had a snake coil'd round them!—Now 't is sun-shine,
And the blood dances freely through its channels!
[*Turns off abruptly; then to himself.*
This is my virtuous, *grateful* Isidore!
[*Then mimicking* ISIDORE's *manner and voice.*
« A common trick of gratitude, my lord!»
Old Gratitude! a dagger would dissect
His « own full heart»—'t were good to see its colour.

VALDEZ.

These magic sights! O that I ne'er had yielded,
To your entreaties! Neither had I yielded,
But that in spite of your own seeming faith
I held it for some innocent stratagem,
Which Love had prompted, to remove the doubts
Of wild Teresa—by fancies quelling fancies!

ORDONIO (*in a slow voice, as reasoning to himself*).

Love! Love! and then we hate! and what? and wherefore?
Hatred and Love! Fancies opposed by fancies!
What, if one reptile sting another reptile!
Where is the crime? The goodly face of nature
Hath one disfeaturing stain the less upon it.
Are we not all predestined Transiency,
And cold Dishonour? Grant it, that this hand
Had given a morsel to the hungry worms
Somewhat too early—Where 's the crime of this?
That this must needs bring on the idiotcy
Of moist-eyed Penitence—'t is like a dream!

VALDEZ.

Wild talk, my son! But thy excess of feeling——

[*Averting himself.*

Almost, I fear, it hath unhinged his brain.

ORDONIO (*now in soliloquy, and now addressing his father: and just after the speech has commenced,* TERESA *reappears and advances slowly*).

Say, I had laid a body in the sun!
Well! in a month there swarm forth from the corse
A thousand, nay, ten thousand sentient beings
In place of that one man.—Say, I had *kill'd* him!

[TERESA *starts and stops listening.*

Yet who shall tell me, that each one and all
Of these ten thousand lives is not as happy
As that one life, which being push'd aside,
Made room for these unnumber'd——

VALDEZ.

O mere madness!

[TERESA *moves hastily forwards, and places herself directly before* ORDONIO.

ORDONIO (*checking the feeling of surprise, and forcing his tones into an expression of playful courtesy*).

Teresa? or the Phantom of Teresa?

TERESA.

Alas! the Phantom only, if in truth
The substance of her Being, her Life's life,
Have ta'en its flight through Alvar's death-wound—
(*A pause.*) Where—
(Even coward Murder grants the dead a grave)
O tell me, Valdez!—answer me, Ordonio!
Where lies the corse of my betrothed husband?

ORDONIO.

There, where Ordonio likewise would fain lie!
In the sleep-compelling earth, in unpierced darkness!
For while we LIVE—
An inward day that never, never sets,
Glares round the soul, and mocks the closing eyelids!
Over his rocky grave the Fir-grove sighs
A lulling ceaseless dirge! 'T is well with HIM.

[*Strides off in agitation towards the altar, but returns as* VALDEZ *is speaking.*

TERESA (*recoiling with the expression appropriate to the passion*).

The rock! the fir-grove! [*To* VALDEZ.
Didst *thou* hear him say it?
Hush! I will ask him!

VALDEZ,

Urge him not—not now!
This we *beheld*. Nor *He* nor I know more,
Than what the magic imagery reveal'd.
The assassin, who press'd foremost of the three——

ORDONIO.

A tender-hearted, scrupulous, *grateful* villain,
Whom I will strangle!

VALDEZ (*looking with anxious disquiet at his Son, yet attempting to proceed with his description*).

While his two companions——

ORDONIO.

Dead! dead already! what care we for the dead?

VALDEZ (*to* TERESA).

Pity him! soothe him! disenchant his spirit!
These supernatural shows, this strange disclosure,
And this too fond affection, which still broods
O'er Alvar's Fate, and still burns to avenge it—
These, struggling with his hopeless love for you,
Distemper him, and give reality
To the creatures of his fancy—

ORDONIO.

Is it so?
Yes! yes! even like a child, that, too abruptly
Roused by a glare of light from deepest sleep,
Starts up bewilder'd and talks idly.
(*Then mysteriously.*) Father!
What if the Moors that made my brother's grave,
Even now were digging ours? What if the bolt,
Though aim'd, I doubt not, at the son of Valdez,
Yet miss'd its true aim when it fell on Alvar?

VALDEZ.

Alvar ne'er fought against the Moors,—say rather,
He was their advocate; but you had march'd
With fire and desolation through their villages.—
Yet he by chance was captured.

ORDONIO.

Unknown, perhaps,
Captured, yet, as the son of Valdez, murder'd.
Leave all to me. Nay, whither, gentle Lady?

VALDEZ.

What seek you now?

TERESA.

A better, surer light
To guide me——

Both VALDEZ *and* ORDONIO.

Whither?

TERESA.

To the only place
Where life yet dwells for me, and ease of heart.
These walls seem threatening to fall in upon me!
Detain me not! a dim Power drives me hence,
And that will be my guide.

VALDEZ.

To find a lover!
Suits that a high-born maiden's modesty?
O folly and shame! Tempt not my rage, Teresa!

TERESA.

Hopeless, I fear no human being's rage.
And am I hastening to the arms——O Heaven!
I haste but to the grave of my beloved!

[*Exit,* VALDEZ *following after her.*

ORDONIO.

This, then, is my reward! and I must love her?
Scorn'd! shudder'd at! yet love her still? yes! yes!
By the deep feelings of Revenge and Hate
I will still love her—woo her—*win* her too!
(*A pause*) Isidore safe and silent, and the portrait
Found on the wizard—he, belike, self-poison'd
To escape the crueller flames———My soul shouts triumph!
The mine is undermined! Blood! Blood! Blood!
They thirst for thy blood! *thy* blood, Ordonio!

[*A pause.*

The hunt is up! and in the midnight wood,
With lights to dazzle and with nets they seek
A timid prey: and lo! the tiger's eye
Glares in the red flame of his hunter's torch!
To Isidore I will dispatch a message,
And lure him to the cavern! ay, that cavern!
He cannot fail to find it. Thither I'll lure him,
Whence he shall never, never more return!

[*Looks through the side window.*

A rim of the sun lies yet upon the sea,
And now 't is gone! All shall be done to-night.

[*Exit.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

A cavern, dark, except where a gleam of moonlight is seen on one side at the further end of it; supposed to be cast on it from a crevice in a part of the cavern out of sight. ISIDORE *alone, an extinguished torch in his hand.*

ISIDORE.

Faith 't was a moving letter—very moving!
« His life in danger, no place safe but this!
'T was his turn now to talk of gratitude.»
And yet—but no! there can't be such a villain.
It can not be!
Thanks to that little crevice,
Which lets the moonlight in! I' ll go and sit by it.
To peep at a tree, or see a he-goat's beard,
Or hear a cow or two breathe loud in their sleep—
Any thing but this crash of water-drops!
These dull abortive sounds that fret the silence
With puny thwartings and mock opposition!
So beats the death-watch to a dead man's ear.

[*He goes out of sight, opposite to the patch of moonlight: returns after a minute's elapse, in an ecstacy of fear.*

A hellish *pit!* The very same I dreamt of!
I was just in—and those damn'd fingers of ice
Which clutch'd my hair up! Ha!—what's that—it mov'd.

[ISIDORE *stands staring at another recess in the cavern. In the mean time* ORDONIO *enters with a torch, and halloos to* ISIDORE.

ISIDORE.

I swear that I saw something moving there!
The moonshine came and went like a flash of lightning——
I swear, I saw it move.

ORDONIO (*goes into the recess, then returns, and with great scorn*).

A jutting clay stone
Props on the long lank weed, that grows beneath:
And the weed nods and drips.

ISIDORE (*forcing a laugh faintly*).

A jest to laugh at!
It was not that which scared me, good my lord.

ORDONIO.

What scared you, then?

ISIDORE.

You see that little rift?
But first permit me!

[*Lights his torch at* ORDONIO's, *and while lighting it.*

(A lighted torch in the hand,
Is no unpleasant object here—one's breath
Floats round the flame, and makes as many colours
As the thin clouds that travel near the moon.)
You see that crevice there?
My torch extinguish'd by these water drops,
And marking that the moonlight came from thence,
I stept in to it, meaning to sit there;
But scarcely had I measured twenty paces—
My body bending forward, yea, o'erbalanced
Almost beyond recoil, on the dim brink
Of a huge chasm I stept. The shadowy moonshine
Filling the Void, so counterfeited Substance,
That my foot hung aslant adown the edge.
Was it my own fear?
Fear too hath its instincts!
(And yet such dens as these are wildly told of,
And there are Beings that live, yet not for the eye)
An arm of frost above and from behind me
Pluck'd up and snatch'd me backward. Merciful Heaven!
You smile! alas, even smiles look ghastly here!
My lord, I pray you, go yourself and view it.

ORDONIO.

It must have shot some pleasant feelings through you.

ISIDORE.

If every atom of a dead man's flesh
Should creep, each one with a particular life,
Yet all as cold as ever—'t was just so!
Or had it drizzled needle points of frost
Upon a feverish head made suddenly bald—

ORDONIO (*interrupting him*).

Why Isidore,
I blush for thy cowardice. It might have startled,
I grant you, even a *brave* man for a moment—
But such a panic—

ISIDORE.

When a boy, my lord!
I could have sate whole hours beside that chasm,
Push'd in huge stones, and heard them strike and rattle
Against its horrid sides: then hung my head
Low down, and listen'd till the heavy fragments
Sank with faint crash in that still groaning well,
Which never thirsty pilgrim blest, which never
A living thing came near—unless, perchance,
Some blind-worm battens on the ropy mould
Close at its edge.

ORDONIO.

Art thou more coward now?

ISIDORE.

Call him, that fears his fellow-man, a coward!
I fear not man—but this inhuman cavern,
It were too bad a prison-house for goblins.
Beside (you 'll smile, my lord), but true it is,
My last night's sleep was very sorely haunted
By what had pass'd between us in the morning.
O sleep of horrors! Now run down and stared at
By Forms so hideous that they mock remembrance—
Now seeing nothing and imagining nothing,
But only being *afraid*—stifled with Fear!
While every goodly or familiar form
Had a strange power of breathing terror round me!
I saw you in a thousand fearful shapes;
And, I entreat your lordship to believe me,
In my last dream——

ORDONIO.

Well?

ISIDORE.

I was in the act
Of falling down that chasm, when Alhadra
Waked me: she heard my heart beat.

ORDONIO.

Strange enough!
Had you been here before?

ISIDORE.

Never, my lord!
But mine eyes do not see it now more clearly,
Than in my dream I saw—that very chasm.

ORDONIO (*stands lost in thought, then after a pause.*)

I know not why it should be! yet it *is*—

ISIDORE.

What is, my lord?

ORDONIO.

Abhorrent from our nature,
To kill a man.—

ISIDORE.

Except in self-defence.

ORDONIO.

Why that 's my case; and yet the soul recoils from it—
'T is so with me at least. But you, perhaps,
Have sterner feelings?

ISIDORE.

Something troubles you.
How shall I serve you? By the life you gave me,
By all that makes that life of value to me,
My wife, my babes, my honour, I swear to you,
Name it, and I will toil to do the thing,
If it be innocent! But this, my lord,
Is not a place where you could perpetrate,
No, nor propose a wicked thing. The darkness,
When ten strides off we know 't is cheerful moonlight,
Collects the guilt, and crowds it round the heart.
It must be innocent.

[ORDONIO *darkly, and in the feeling of self-justification, tells what he conceives of his own character and actions, speaking of himself in the third person.*

ORDONIO.

Thyself be judge.
One of our family knew this place well.

ISIDORE.

Who? when? my lord?

ORDONIO.

What boots it, who or when?
Hang up thy torch—I 'll tell his tale to thee.

[*They hang up their torches on some ridge in the cavern.*

He was a man different from other men,
And he despised them, yet revered himself.

ISIDORE (*aside*).

He? *He* despised? Thou 'rt speaking of thyself!
I am on my guard, however: no surprise.

[*Then to* ORDONIO.

What! he was mad?

ORDONIO.

All men seem'd mad to him!
Nature had made him for some other planet,
And press'd his soul into a human shape
By accident or malice. In this world
He found no fit companion.

ISIDORE.

Of himself he speaks.

[*Aside.*

Alas! poor wretch!
Mad men are mostly proud.

ORDONIO.

He walk'd alone,
And phantom thoughts unsought-for troubled him.
Something within would still be shadowing out
All possibilities; and with these shadows
His mind held dalliance. Once, as so it happen'd,
A fancy cross'd him wilder than the rest:
To this in moody murmur and low voice
He yielded utterance, as some talk in sleep:
The man who heard him.—
Why didst thou look round?

ISIDORE.

I have a prattler three years old, my lord!
In truth he is my darling. As I went
From forth my door, he made a moan in sleep—
But I am talking idly—pray proceed!
And what did this man?

ORDONIO.

With his human hand
He gave a substance and reality
To that wild fancy of a possible thing.—
Well it was done! [*Then very wildly.*
Why babblest thou of guilt?
The deed was done, and it pass'd fairly off.
And he whose tale I tell thee—dost thou listen?

ISIDORE.

I would, my lord, you were by my fire-side,
I 'd listen to you with an eager eye,
Though you began this cloudy tale at midnight;
But I do listen—pray proceed, my lord.

ORDONIO.

Where was I?

ISIDORE.

He of whom you tell the tale—

ORDONIO.

Surveying all things with a quiet scorn,
Tamed himself down to living purposes,
The occupations and the semblances
Of ordinary men—and such he seem'd!
But that same over ready agent—he—

ISIDORE.

Ah! what of *him*, my lord?

ORDONIO.

He proved a traitor,
Betray'd the mystery to a brother traitor,
And they between them hatch'd a damned plot
To hunt him down to infamy and death.
What did the Valdez? I am proud of the name
Since he dared do it.—

[ORDONIO *grasps his sword, and turns off from* ISIDORE; *then after a pause returns.*

Our links burn dimly.

ISIDORE.

A dark tale darkly finish'd! Nay, my lord!
Tell what he did.

ORDONIO.

That which his wisdom prompted—
He made the Traitor meet him in this cavern,
And here he kill'd the Traitor.

ISIDORE.

No! the fool!
He had not wit enough to be a traitor.
Poor thick-eyed beetle! not to have foreseen
That he who gull'd thee with a whimper'd lie
To murder his own brother, would not scruple
To murder *thee*, if e'er his guilt grew jealous,
And he could steal upon thee in the dark!

ORDONIO.

Thou wouldst not then have come, if—

ISIDORE.

Oh yes, my lord!
I would have met him arm'd, and scared the coward.

[ISIDORE *throws off his robe; shows himself armed, and draws his sword.*

ORDONIO.

Now this is excellent, and warms the blood!
My heart was drawing back, drawing me back

With weak and womanish scruples. Now my Vengeance
Beckons me onwards with a warrior's mien,
And claims that life, my pity robb'd her of—
Now will I kill thee, thankless slave! and count it
Among my comfortable thoughts hereafter.

ISIDORE.

And all my little ones fatherless—

Die thou first.

[*They fight;* ORDONIO *disarms* ISIDORE, *and in disarming him throws his sword up that recess opposite to which they were standing.* ISIDORE *hurries into the recess with his torch,* ORDONIO *follows him; a loud cry of 'Traitor! Monster!' is heard from the cavern, and in a moment* ORDONIO *returns alone.*

ORDONIO.

I have hurl'd him down the chasm! Treason for treason.
He *dreamt* of it: henceforward let him sleep
A dreamless sleep, from which no wife can wake him.
His *dream* too is made out—Now for his friend.

[*Exit* ORDONIO.

SCENE II.[1]

The interior Court of a Saracenic or Gothic Castle, with the Iron Gate of a Dungeon visible.

TERESA.

Heart-chilling Superstition! thou canst glaze
Even Pity's eye with her own frozen tear.
In vain I urge the tortures that await him;
Even Selma, reverend guardian of my childhood,
My second mother, shuts her heart against me!
Well, I have won from her what most imports
The present need, this secret of the dungeon,
Known only to herself.—A Moor! a Sorcerer!
No, I have faith, that nature ne'er permitted
Baseness to wear a form so noble. True,
I doubt not, that Ordonio had suborn'd him
To act some part in some unholy fraud;
As little doubt, that for some unknown purpose
He hath baffled his suborner, terror-struck him,
And that Ordonio meditates revenge!
But my resolve is fix'd! myself will rescue him,
And learn if haply he know aught of Alvar.

Enter VALDEZ.

VALDEZ.

Still sad?—and gazing at the massive door
Of that fell Dungeon which thou ne'er hadst sight of,
Save what, perchance, thy infant fancy shaped it,
When the nurse still'd thy cries with unmeant threats.
Now by my faith, Girl! this same wizard haunts thee!
A stately man, and eloquent and tender—

[*With a sneer.*

Who then need wonder if a lady sighs
Even at the thought of what these stern Dominicans—

TERESA (*with solemn indignation*).

The horror of their ghastly punishments
Doth so o'ertop the height of all compassion,
That I should feel too little for mine enemy,
If it were possible I could feel more,
Even though the dearest inmates of our household
Were doom'd to suffer them. That such things are—

VALDEZ.

Hush, thoughtless woman!

[1] Vide Appendix, Note 2.

TERESA.

Nay, it wakes within me
More than a woman's spirit.

VALDEZ.

No more of this—
What if Monviedro or his creatures hear us!
I dare not listen to you.

TERESA.

My honour'd lord,
These were my Alvar's lessons; and whene'er
I bend me o'er his portrait, I repeat them,
As if to give a voice to the mute image.

VALDEZ.

———We have mourn'd for Alvar.
Of his sad fate there now remains no doubt.
Have I no other son?

TERESA.

Speak not of him!
That low imposture! That mysterious picture!
If this be madness, must I wed a madman?
And if not madness, there is mystery,
And guilt doth lurk behind it.

VALDEZ.

Is this well?

TERESA.

Yes, it is truth: saw you his countenance?
How rage, remorse, and scorn, and stupid fear,
Displaced each other with swift interchanges?
O that I had indeed the sorcerer's power! ——
I would call up before thine eyes the image
Of my betrothed Alvar, of thy first-born!
His own fair countenance, his kingly forehead,
His tender smiles, love's day-dawn on his lips!
That spiritual and almost heavenly light
In his commanding eye—his mien heroic,
Virtue's own native heraldry! to man
Genial, and pleasant to his guardian angel.
Whene'er he gladden'd, how the gladness spread
Wide round him! and when oft with swelling tears,
Flash'd through by indignation, he bewail'd
The wrongs of Belgium's martyr'd patriots,
Oh, what a grief was *there*—for joy to envy,
Or gaze upon enamour'd!

O my father!
Recall that morning when we knelt together,
And thou didst bless our loves! O even now,
Even now, my sire! to thy mind's eye present him,
As at that moment he rose up before thee,
Stately, with beaming look! Place, place beside him
Ordonio's dark perturbed countenance!
Then bid me (Oh thou couldst not) bid me turn
From him, the joy, the triumph of our kind!
To take in exchange that brooding man, who never
Lifts up his eye from the earth, unless to scowl.

VALDEZ.

Ungrateful woman! I have tried to stifle
An old man's passion! was it not enough,
That thou hast made my son a restless man,
Banish'd his health, and half unhinged his reason;
But that thou wilt insult him with suspicion?
And toil to blast his honour? I am old,
A comfortless old man!

TERESA.

O Grief! to hear
Hateful entreaties from a voice we love!

Enter a PEASANT *and presents a letter to* VALDEZ.

VALDEZ (*reading it*).

«He dares not venture hither!» Why what can this mean?
« Lest the Familiars of the Inquisition,
That watch around my gates, should intercept him;
But he conjures me, that without delay
I hasten to him—for my own sake entreats me
To guard from danger him I hold imprison'd—
He will reveal a secret, the joy of which
Will even outweigh the sorrow.»—Why what can this be?
Perchance it is some Moorish stratagem,
To have in me a hostage for his safety.
Nay, that they dare not? Ho! collect my servants!
I will go thither—let them arm themselves.

[*Exit* VALDEZ.

TERESA (*alone*).

The moon is high in heaven, and all is hush'd.
Yet, anxious listener! I have seem'd to hear
A low dead thunder mutter through the night,
As't were a giant angry in his sleep.
O Alvar! Alvar! that they could return,
Those blessed days that imitated heaven,
When we two wont to walk at even-tide;
When we saw nought but beauty; when we heard
The voice of that Almighty One who loved us
In every gale that breathed, and wave that murmur'd!
O we have listen'd, even till high-wrought pleasure
Hath half assumed the countenance of grief,
And the deep sigh seem'd to heave up a weight
Of bliss, that press'd too heavy on the heart.

[*A pause.*

And this majestic Moor, seems he not one
Who oft and long communing with my Alvar
Hath drunk in kindred lustre from his presence,
And guides me to him with reflected light?
What if in yon dark dungeon coward Treachery
Be groping for him with envenom'd poignard—
Hence womanish fears, traitors to love and duty—
I 'll free him. [*Exit* TERESA.

SCENE III.

The Mountains by moonlight. ALHADRA *alone in a Moorish dress.*

ALHADRA.

Yon hanging woods, that touch'd by autumn seem
As they were blossoming hues of fire and gold;
The flower-like woods, most lovely in decay,
The many clouds, the sea, the rock, the sands,
Lie in the silent moonshine: and the owl,
(Strange! very strange!) the screech-owl only wakes!
Sole voice, sole eye of all this world of beauty!
Unless, perhaps, she sing her screeching song
To a herd of wolves, that skulk athirst for blood.
Why such a thing am I?—Where are these men?
I need the sympathy of human faces,
To beat away this deep contempt for all things,
Which quenches my revenge. Oh! would to Alla,
The raven, or the sea-mew, were appointed
To bring me food! or rather that my soul
Could drink in life from the universal air!
It were a lot divine in some small skiff
Along some Ocean's boundless solitude,
To float for ever with a careless course,
And think myself the only being alive!

My children!—Isidore's children!—Son of Valdez,
This hath new-strung mine arm. Thou coward tyrant!
To stupify a woman's heart with anguish,
Till she forgot—even that she was a mother!

[*She fixes her eye on the earth. Then drop in one after another, from different parts of the stage, a considerable number of Morescoes, all in Moorish garments and Moorish armour. They form a circle at a distance round* ALHADRA, *and remain silent till the Second in command,* NAOMI, *enters, distinguished by his dress and armour, and by the silent obeisance paid to him on his entrance by the other Moors.*

NAOMI.

Woman! may Alla and the prophet bless thee!
We have obey'd thy call. Where is our chief?
And why didst thou enjoin these Moorish garments?

ALHADRA (*raising her eyes, and looking round on the circle*).

Warriors of Mahomet! faithful in the battle!
My countrymen! Come ye prepared to work
An honourable deed? And would ye work it
In the slave's garb? Curse on those Christian robes!
They are spell-blasted: and whoever wears them,
His arm shrinks wither'd, his heart melts away,
And his bones soften.

NAOMI.

Where is Isidore?

ALHADRA (*in a deep low voice*).

This night I went from forth my house, and left,
His children all asleep: and he was living!
And I return'd and found them still asleep,
But he had perish'd——

ALL THE MORESCOES.

Perish'd?

ALHADRA.

He had perish'd!
Sleep on, poor babes! not one of you doth know
That he is fatherless—a desolate orphan!
Why should we wake them? Can an infant's arm
Revenge his murder?

ONE MORESCOE (*to another*).

Did she say his murder?

NAOMI.

Murder? Not murder'd?

ALHADRA.

Murder'd by a Christian!

[*They all at once draw their sabres.*

ALHADRA (*to* NAOMI, *who advances from the circle*).

Brother of Zagri! fling away thy sword;
This is thy chieftain's! [*He steps forward to take it.*
Dost thou dare receive it?
For I have sworn by Alla and the Prophet,
No tear shall dim these eyes, this woman's heart
Shall heave no groan, till I have seen that sword
Wet with the life-blood of the son of Valdez!

[*A pause.*

Ordonio was your chieftain's murderer!

NAOMI.

He dies, by Alla!

ALL (*kneeling*).

By Alla!

ALHADRA.

This night your chieftain arm'd himself,

And hurried from me. But I follow'd him
At distance, till I saw him enter—*there!*

NAOMI.

The cavern?

ALHADRA.

Yes, the mouth of yonder cavern.
After a while I saw the son of Valdez
Rush by with flaring torch; be likewise enter'd.
There was another and a longer pause;
And once, methought I heard the clash of swords!
And soon the son of Valdez re-appear'd:
He flung his torch towards the moon in sport,
And seem'd as he were mirthful! I stood listening,
Impatient for the footsteps of my husband!

NAOMI.

Thou called'st him?

ALHADRA.

I crept into the cavern—
'T was dark and very silent. [*Then wildly.*
What saidst thou?
No! no! I did not dare call, Isidore,
Lest I should hear no answer! A brief while,
Belike, I lost all thought and memory
Of that for which I came! After that pause,
O Heaven! I heard a groan, and follow'd it:
And yet another groan, which guided me
Into a strange recess—and there was *light,*
A hideous light! his torch lay on the ground;
Its flame burnt dimly o'er a chasm's brink:
I spake; and whilst I spake, a feeble groan
Came from that chasm! it was his last! his death-groan!

NAOMI.

Comfort her, Alla.

ALHADRA.

I stood in unimaginable trance
And agony that cannot be remember'd,
Listening with horrid hope to hear a groan!
But I had heard his last: my husband's death-groan?

NAOMI.

Haste! let us onward.

ALHADRA.

I look'd far down the pit—
My sight was bounded by a jutting fragment:
And it was stain'd with blood. Then first I shriek'd,
My eye-balls burnt, my brain grew hot as fire,
And all the hanging drops of the wet roof
Turn'd into blood—I saw them turn to blood!
And I was leaping wildly down the chasm,
When on the farther brink I saw his sword,
And it said, Vengeance!—Curses on my tongue!
The moon hath moved in Heaven, and I am here,
And he hath not had vengeance! Isidore!
Spirit of Isidore! thy murderer lives!
Away! away!

ALL.

Away! away!
[*She rushes off, all following her.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.

A Dungeon.

ALVAR (*alone*) *rises slowly from a bed of reeds.*

ALVAR.

And this place my forefathers made for man!
This is the process of our love and wisdom
To each poor brother who offends against us—
Most innocent, perhaps—and what if guilty?
Is this the only cure? Merciful God!
Each pore and natural outlet shrivell'd up
By ignorance and parching poverty,
His energies roll back upon his heart
And stagnate and corrupt, till, changed to poison,
They break out on him, like a loathsome plague-spot!
Then we call in our pamper'd mountebanks:
And this is their best cure! uncomforted
And friendless solitude, groaning and tears,
And savage faces, at the clanking hour,
Seen through the steam and vapours of his dungeon
By the lamp's dismal twilight! So he lies
Circled with evil, till his very soul
Unmoulds its essence, hopelessly deform'd
By sights of evermore deformity!
With other ministrations thou, O Nature!
Healest thy wandering and distemper'd child:
Thou pourest on him thy soft influences,
Thy sunny hues, fair forms, and breathing sweets;
Thy melodies of woods, and winds, and waters!
Till he relent, and can no more endure
To be a jarring and a dissonant thing
Amid this general dance and minstrelsy;
But, bursting into tears, wins back his way,
His angry spirit heal'd and harmonized
By the benignant touch of love and beauty.
I am chill and weary! Yon rude bench of stone,
In that dark angle, the sole resting-place!
But the self-approving mind is its own light,
And life's best warmth still radiates from the heart
Where love sits brooding, and an honest purpose.
[*Retires out of sight.*

Enter TERESA *with a Taper.*

TERESA.

It has chill'd my very life—my own voice scares me;
Yet when I hear it not I seem to lose
The substance of my being—my strongest grasp
Sends inwards but weak witness that I am.
I seek to cheat the echo.—How the half sounds
Blend with this strangled light! Is he not here—
[*Looking round.*
O for one human face here—but to see
One human face here to sustain me.—Courage!
It is but my own fear! The life within me,
It sinks and wavers like this cone of flame,
Beyond which I scarce dare look onward! Oh!
[*Shuddering.*
If I faint? If this inhuman den should be
At once my death-bed and my burial vault?
[*Faintly screams as* ALVAR *emerges from the recess.*
ALVAR (*rushes towards her, and catches her as she is falling*).
O gracious heaven! it is, it is Teresa!
Shall I reveal myself? The sudden shock
Of rapture will blow out this spark of life,
And Joy complete what Terror has begun.
O ye impetuous beatings here, be still!
Teresa, best beloved! pale, pale, and cold!
Her pulse doth flutter! Teresa! my Teresa!
TERESA (*recovering, looks round wildly*).
I heard a voice; but often in my dreams
I hear that voice! and wake and try—and try—

'o hear it waking! but I never could—
nd 't is so now—even so! Well: he is dead—
lurder'd, perhaps! And I am faint, and feel
s if it were no painful thing to die!

ALVAR (*eagerly*).

elieve it not, sweet maid! Believe it not,
eloved woman! 'T was a low imposture,
ramed by a guilty wretch.

TERESA (*retires from him, and feebly supports herself against a pillar of the dungeon*).

Ha! Who art thou?

ALVAR (*exceedingly affected*).

uborn'd by his brother—

TERESA.

Didst *thou* murder him?
nd dost thou now repent? Poor troubled man,
do forgive thee, and may Heaven forgive thee!

ALVAR.

Ordonio—he—

TERESA.

If thou didst murder him—
lis spirit ever at the throne of God
sks mercy for thee: prays for mercy for thee,
Vith tears in Heaven!

ALVAR.

Alvar was not murder'd.
e calm! Be calm, sweet maid!

TERESA (*wildly*).

Nay, nay, but tell me!
[*A pause; then presses her forehead.*
O 't is lost again!
his dull confused pain—
[*A pause, she gazes at* ALVAR.
Mysterious man!
Iethinks I can not fear thee: for thine eye
Doth swim with love and pity—Well! Ordonio—
Oh my foreboding heart? and *he* suborn'd thee,
nd thou didst spare his life? Blessings shower on thee,
s many as the drops twice counted o'er
n the fond faithful heart of his Teresa!

ALVAR.

can endure no more. The Moorish Sorcerer
Exists but in the stain upon his face.
That picture—

TERESA (*advances towards him*).

Ha! speak on!

ALVAR.

Beloved Teresa!
t told but half the truth. O let this portrait
Tell all—that Alvar lives—that he is here!
Thy much deceived but ever faithful Alvar.
[*Takes her portrait from his neck, and gives it her.*

TERESA (*receiving the portrait*).

The same—it is the same. Ah! Who art thou?
Nay I will call thee, ALVAR! [*She falls on his neck.*

ALVAR.

O joy unutterable!
But hark! a sound as of removing bars
At the dungeon's outer door. A brief, brief while
Conceal thyself, my love! It is Ordonio.
For the honour of our race, for our dear father;
O for himself too (he is still my brother)
Let me recall him to his nobler nature,
That he may wake as from a dream of murder!
O let me reconcile him to himself,
Open the sacred source of penitent tears,
And be once more his own beloved Alvar.

TERESA.

O my all virtuous love! I fear to leave thee
With that obdurate man.

ALVAR.

Thou dost not leave me!
But a brief while retire into the darkness:
O that my joy could spread its sunshine round thee!

TERESA.

The sound of thy voice shall be my music!
[*Retiring, she returns hastily and embraces* ALVAR.
Alvar! my Alvar! am I sure I hold thee?
Is it no dream? thee in my arms, my Alvar! [*Exit.*
[*A noise at the Dungeon door. It opens, and* ORDONIO *enters, with a goblet in his hand.*

ORDONIO.

Hail, potent wizard! in my gayer mood
I pour'd forth a libation to old Pluto,
And as I brimm'd the bowl, I thought on thee.
Thou hast conspired against my life and honour,
Hast trick'd me foully; yet I hate thee not.
Why should I hate thee? this same world of ours,
'T is but a pool amid a storm of rain,
And we the air-bladders that course up and down,
And joust and tilt in merry tournament;
And when one bubble runs foul of another,
[*Waving his hand to* ALVAR.
The weaker needs must break.

ALVAR.

I see thy heart!
There is a frightful glitter in thine eye
Which doth betray thee. Inly-tortured man!
This is the revelry of a drunken anguish,
Which fain would scoff away the pang of guilt,
And quell each human feeling.

ORDONIO.

Feeling! feeling!
The death of a man—the breaking of a bubble—
'T is true I cannot sob for such misfortunes;
But faintness, cold and hunger—curses on me
If willingly I e'er inflicted them!
Come, take the beverage; this chill place demands it.
[ORDONIO *proffers the goblet.*

ALVAR.

Yon insect on the wall,
Which moves this way and that its hundred limbs,
Were it a toy of mere mechanic craft,
It were an infinitely curious thing!
But it has life, Ordonio! life, enjoyment!
And by the power of its miraculous will
Wields all the complex movements of its frame
Unerringly to pleasurable ends!
Saw I that insect on this goblet's brim
I would remove it with an anxious pity!

ORDONIO.

What meanest thou?

ALVAR.

There's poison in the wine.

ORDONIO.

Thou hast guess'd right; there 's poison in the wine.
There 's poison in 't—which of us two shall drink it?
For one of us must die!

ALVAR.

Whom dost thou think me?

ORDONIO.

The accomplice and sworn friend of Isidore.

ALVAR.

I know him not.
And yet methinks, I have heard the name but lately.
Means he the husband of the Moorish woman?
Isidore? Isidore?

ORDONIO.

Good! good! that lie! by heaven it has restored me.
Now I am thy master!—Villain! thou shalt drink it,
Or die a bitterer death.

ALVAR.

What strange solution
Hast thou found out to satisfy thy fears,
And drug them to unnatural sleep?

[ALVAR *takes the goblet, and throwing it to the ground with stern contempt.*

My master!

ORDONIO.

Thou mountebank!

ALVAR.

Mountebank and villain!
What then art thou? For shame, put up thy sword!
What boots a weapon in a wither'd arm?
I fix mine eye upon thee, and thou tremblest!
I speak, and fear and wonder crush thy rage,
And turn it to a motionless distraction!
Thou blind self-worshipper! thy pride, thy cunning,
Thy faith in universal villany,
Thy shallow sophisms, thy pretended scorn
For all thy human brethren—out upon them!
What have they done for thee? have they given thee peace?
Cured thee of starting in thy sleep? or made
The darkness pleasant when thou wakest at midnight!
Art happy when alone? Canst walk by thyself
With even step and quiet cheerfulness?
Yet, yet thou mayest be saved——

ORDONIO (*vacantly repeating the words*).

Saved? saved?

ALVAR.

One pang!
Could I call up one pang of true Remorse!

ORDONIO.

He told me of the babes that prattled to him,
His fatherless little ones! Remorse! Remorse!
Where got'st thou that fool's word? Curse on Remorse!
Can it give up the dead, or recompact
A mangled body? mangled—dash'd to atoms!
Not all the blessings of a host of angels
Can blow away a desolate widow's curse!
And though thou spill thy heart's blood for atonement,
It will not weigh against an orphan's tear!

ALVAR (*almost overcome by his feelings*).

But Alvar——

ORDONIO.

Ha! it chokes thee in the throat,
Even thee; and yet I pray thee speak it out.
Still Alvar! Alvar!—howl it in mine ear,
Heap it like coals of fire upon my heart,
And shoot it hissing through my brain!

ALVAR.

Alas!
That day when thou didst leap from off the rock
Into the waves, and grasp'd thy sinking brother,
And bore him to the strand; then, son of Valdez,
How sweet and musical the name of Alvar!
Then, then, Ordonio, he was dear to thee,
And thou wert dear to him; Heaven only knows
How very dear thou wert! Why didst thou hate him?
O heaven! how he would fall upon thy neck,
And weep forgiveness!

ORDONIO.

Spirit of the dead!
Methinks I know thee! ha! my brain turns wild
At its own dreams!—off—off fantastic shadow!

ALVAR.

I fain would tell thee what I am! but dare not!

ORDONIO.

Cheat! villain! traitor! whatsoever thou be—
I fear thee, man!

TERESA (*rushing out and falling on* ALVAR'S *neck*).

Ordonio! 't is thy brother.

[ORDONIO *with frantic wildness runs upon* ALVAR *with his sword.* TERESA *flings herself on* ORDONIO *and arrests his arm.*

Stop, madman, stop

ALVAR.

Does then this thin disguise impenetrably
Hide Alvar from thee? Toil and painful wounds
And long imprisonment in unwholesome dungeons,
Have marr'd perhaps all trait and lineament
Of what I was! But chiefly, chiefly, brother,
My anguish for thy guilt!
Ordonio—Brother!
Nay, nay, thou shalt embrace me.

ORDONIO (*drawing back, and gazing at* ALVAR *with a countenance of at once awe and terror*).

Touch me not!
Touch not pollution, Alvar! I will die.

[*He attempts to fall on his sword,* ALVAR *and* TERESA *prevent him.*

ALVAR.

We will find means to save your honour. Live,
Oh live, Ordonio! for our father's sake!
Spare his grey hairs!

TERESA.

And you may yet be happy.

ORDONIO.

O horror! not a thousand years in heaven
Could recompose this miserable heart,
Or make it capable of one brief joy!
Live! Live! Why yes! 't were well to live with you:
For is it fit a villain should be proud?
My brother! I will kneel to you, my brother!

[*Kneeling*

Forgive me, Alvar!—*Curse* me with forgiveness!

ALVAR.

Call back thy soul, Ordonio, and look round thee:
Now is the time for greatness! Think that heaven—

TERESA.

O mark his eye! he hears not what you say.

ORDONIO (*pointing at the vacancy*).

Yes mark his eye! there's fascination in it!
Thou saidst thou didst not know him—That is he!
He comes upon me!

ALVAR.

Heal, O heal him, heaven!

ORDONIO.

Nearer and nearer! and I can not stir!
Will no one hear these stifled groans, and wake me?

He would have died to save me, and I kill'd him—
A husband and a father!—

TERESA.

Some secret poison

Drinks up his spirits!

ORDONIO (*fiercely recollecting himself*).

Let the Eternal Justice
Prepare my punishment in the obscure world—
I will not bear to live—to live—O agony!
And be myself alone my own sore torment!

[*The doors of the dungeon are broken open, and in rush* ALHADRA, *and the band of* MORESCOES.]

ALHADRA.

Seize first that man!

[ALVAR *presses onward to defend* ORDONIO.

ORDONIO.

Off, ruffians! I have flung away my sword.
Woman, my life is thine! to thee I give it!
Off! he that touches me with his hand of flesh,
I 'll rend his limbs asunder! I have strength
With this bare arm to scatter you like ashes.

ALHADRA.

My husband—

ORDONIO.

Yes, I murder'd him most foully.

ALVAR *and* TERESA.

O horrible!

ALHADRA.

Why didst thou leave his children?
Demon, thou shouldst have sent thy dogs of hell
To lap their blood! Then, then I might have harden'd
My soul in misery, and have had comfort.
I would have stood far off, quiet though dark,
And bade the race of men raise up a mourning
For a deep horror of desolation,
Too great to be one soul's particular lot!
Brother of Zagri! let me lean upon thee.

[*Struggling to suppress her feelings.*

The time is not yet come for woman's anguish,
I have not seen *his* blood—Within an hour
Those little ones will crowd around and ask me,
Where is our father? I shall curse thee then!
Wert thou in heaven, my curse would pluck thee thence!

TERESA.

He doth repent! See, see, I kneel to thee!
O let him live! That aged man, his father——

ALHADRA (*sternly*).

Why had he such a son?

[*Shouts from the distance of,* Rescue! Rescue!
Alvar! Alvar! *and the voice of* VALDEZ *heard.*

ALHADRA.

Rescue?—and Isidore's Spirit unavenged?
The deed be mine! [*Suddenly stabs* ORDONIO.
Now take *my* life!

ORDONIO (*staggering from the wound*).

Atonement!

ALVAR (*while with* TERESA *supporting* ORDONIO).

Arm of avenging Heaven
Thou hast snatch'd from me my most cherish'd hope—
But go! my word was pledged to thee.

ORDONIO.

Away!
Brave not my father's rage! I thank thee! Thou—

[*Then turning his eyes languidly to* ALVAR.

She hath avenged the blood of Isidore!
I stood in silence like a slave before her
That I might taste the wormwood and the gall,
And satiate this self-accusing heart
With bitterer agonies than death can give.
Forgive me, Alvar!

Oh!—couldst thou forget me! [*Dies.*

[ALVAR *and* TERESA *bend over the body of* ORDONIO.

ALHADRA (*to the Moors*).

I thank thee, Heaven! thou hast ordain'd it wisely,
That still extremes bring their own cure. That point
In misery, which makes the oppressed Man
Regardless of his own life, makes him too
Lord of the Oppressor's—Knew I a hundred men
Despairing, but not palsied by despair,
This arm should shake the Kingdoms of the World;
The deep foundations of iniquity
Should sink away, earth groaning from beneath them;
The strong holds of the cruel men should fall,
Their Temples and their mountainous Towers should fall;
Till Desolation seemed a beautiful thing,
And all that were and had the Spirit of Life,
Sang a new song to her who had gone forth,
Conquering and still to conquer!

[ALHADRA *hurries off with the Moors; the stage fills with armed Peasants and Servants,* ZULIMEZ *and* VALDEZ *at their head.* VALDEZ *rushes into* ALVAR'S *arms.*

ALVAR.

Turn not thy face that way, my father! hide,
Oh hide it from his eye! Oh let thy joy
Flow in unmingled stream through thy first blessing.

[*Both kneel to* VALDEZ.

VALDEZ.

My Son! My Alvar! bless, Oh bless him, heaven!

TERESA.

Me too, my Father?

VALDEZ.

Bless, Oh bless my children!

[*Both rise.*

ALVAR.

Delights so full, if unalloyed with grief,
Were ominous. In these strange dread events
Just Heaven instructs us with an awful voice,
That Conscience rules us e'en against our choice.
Our inward monitress to guide or warn,
If listened to; but if repelled with scorn,
At length as dire Remorse, she reappears,
Works in our guilty hopes, and selfish fears!
Still bids, Remember! and still cries, Too late!
And while she scares us, goads us to our fate.

APPENDIX.

Note 1, page 81, col. 1.

You are a painter.

The following lines I have preserved in this place, not so much as explanatory of the picture of the assassination, as (if I may say so without disrespect to the Public) to gratify my own feelings, the passage being no mere *fancy* portrait; but a slight, yet not unfaithful,

profile of one,[1] who still lives, nobilitate felix, arte clarior, vitâ colendissimus.

ZULIMEZ (*speaking of Alvar in the third person*).

Such was the noble Spaniard's own relation.
He told me, too, how in his early youth,
And his first travels, 't was his choice or chance
To make long sojourn in sea-wedded Venice;
There won the love of that divine old man,
Courted by mightiest kings, the famous Titian!
Who, like a second and more lovely Nature,
By the sweet mystery of lines and colours,
Changed the blank canvas to a magic mirror,
That made the Absent present; and to Shadows
Gave light, depth, substance, bloom, yea, thought and motion.
He loved the old man, and revered his art:
And though of noblest birth and ample fortune,
The young enthusiast thought it no scorn
But this inalienable ornament,
To be his pupil, and with filial zeal
By practice to appropriate the sage lessons,
Which the gay, smiling old man gladly gave.
The Art, he honour'd thus, requited him:
And in the following and calamitous years
Beguiled the hours of his captivity.

ALHADRA.

And then he framed this picture? and unaided
By arts unlawful, spell, or talisman!

ALVAR.

A potent spell, a mighty talisman!
The imperishable memory of the deed
Sustained by love, and grief, and indignation!
So vivid were the forms within his brain,
His very eyes, when shut, made pictures of them!

Note 2, page 89, col. 1.

The following Scene, as unfit for the Stage, was taken from the Tragedy, in the year 1797, and published in the Lyrical Ballads. But this work having been long out of print, I have been advised to reprint it, as a Note to the second Scene of Act the Fourth, p. 89.

Enter TERESA *and* SELMA.

TERESA.

'T is said, he spake of you familiarly,
As mine and Alvar's common foster-mother.

SELMA.

Now blessings on the man, whoe'er he be,
That join'd your names with mine! O my sweet Lady,
As often as I think of those dear times,
When you two little ones would stand, at eve,
On each side of my chair, and make me learn
All you had learnt in the day; and how to talk
In gentle phrase; then bid me sing to you—
'T is more like heaven to come, than what *has* been!

TERESA.

But that entrance, Selma?

SELMA.

Can no one hear? It is a perilous tale!

TERESA.

No one.

SELMA.

My husband's father told it me,
Poor old Sesina—angels rest his soul!
He was a woodman, and could fell and saw
With lusty arm. You know that huge round beam
Which props the hanging wall of the old Chapel?
Beneath that tree, while yet it was a tree,
He found a baby wrapt in mosses, lined
With thistle-beards, and such small locks of wool
As hang on brambles. Well, he brought him home,
And reared him at the then Lord Valdez' cost.
And so the babe grew up a pretty boy,
A pretty boy, but most unteachable—
And never learnt a prayer, nor told a bead,
But knew the names of birds, and mock'd their notes,
And whistled, as he were a bird himself:
And all the autumn 't was his only play
To gather seeds of wild-flowers, and to plant them
With earth and water on the stumps of trees.
A Friar, who gather'd simples in the wood,
A grey-hair'd man, he loved this little boy:
The boy loved him, and, when the friar taught him,
He soon could write with the pen; and from that time
Lived chiefly at the Convent or the Castle.
So he became a rare and learned youth:
But O! poor wretch! he read, and read, and read,
Till his brain turn'd; and ere his twentieth year
He had unlawful thoughts of many things:
And though he pray'd, he never loved to pray
With holy men, nor in a holy place.
But yet his speech, it was so soft and sweet,
The late Lord Valdez ne'er was wearied with him.
And once, as by the north side of the chapel
They stood together, chain'd in deep discourse,
The earth heaved under them with such a groan,
That the wall totter'd, and had well nigh fallen
Right on their heads. My Lord was sorely frighten'd;
A fever seized him, and he made confession
Of all the heretical and lawless talk
Which brought this judgment: so the youth was seized,
And cast into that hole. My husband's father
Sobb'd like a child—it almost broke his heart:
And once as he was working near this dungeon,
He heard a voice distinctly; 't was the youth's,
Who sang a doleful song about green fields,
How sweet it were on lake or wide savannah
To hunt for food, and be a naked man,
And wander up and down at liberty.
He always doted on the youth, and now
His love grew desperate; and defying death,
He made that cunning entrance I described,
And the young man escaped.

TERESA.

'T is a sweet tale:
Such as would lull a listening child to sleep,
His rosy face besoil'd with unwiped tears.
And what became of him?

SELMA.

He went on shipboard
With those bold voyagers who made discovery
Of golden lands. Sesina's younger brother
Went likewise, and when he return'd to Spain,
He told Sesina, that the poor mad youth,
Soon after they arrived in that new world,
In spite of his dissuasion, seized a boat,
And all alone set sail by silent moonlight
Up a great river, great as any sea,
And ne'er was heard of more: but 't is supposed,
He lived and died among the savage men.

[1] Sir George Beaumont. (Written 1814.)

Zapolya;

A CHRISTMAS TALE.

IN TWO PARTS.

Πὰρ πυρὶ χρὴ τοιαῦτα λέγειν χειμῶνος ἐν ὥρᾳ.
Apud ATHENÆUM.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE form of the following dramatic poem is in humble imitation of the Winter's Tale of Shakspeare, except that I have called the first part a Prelude instead of a first Act, as a somewhat nearer resemblance to the plan of the ancients, of which one specimen is left us in the Æschylian Trilogy of the Agamemnon, the Orestes, and the Eumenides. Though a matter of *form* merely, yet two plays, on different periods of the same tale, might seem less bold, than an interval of twenty years between a first and second act. This is, however, in mere obedience to custom. The effect does not, in reality, at all depend on the *Time* of the interval; but on a very different principle. There are cases in which an interval of twenty hours between the acts would have a worse effect (i. e. render the imagination less disposed to take the position required) than twenty years in other cases. For the rest, I shall be well content if my readers will take it up, read and judge it, as a Christmas tale.

CHARACTERS.

MEN.

EMERICK, *usurping King of Illyria.*
RAAB KIUPRILI, *an Illyrian Chieftain.*
CASIMIR, *son of Kiuprili.*
CHEF RAGOZZI, *a Military Commander.*

WOMAN.

ZAPOLYA, *Queen of Illyria.*

ZAPOLYA.

PART I.

THE PRELUDE, ENTITLED «THE USURPER'S FORTUNE.»

SCENE I.

Front of the Palace with a magnificent Colonnade. On one side a military Guard-house. Sentries pacing backward and forward before the Palace. CHEF RAGOZZI, *at the door of the Guard-house, as looking forwards at some object in the distance.*

CHEF RAGOZZI.

My eyes deceive me not, it must be he!
Who but our chief, my more than father, who
But Raab Kiuprili moves with *such* a gait?
Lo! e'en this eager and unwonted haste
But agitates, not quells, its majesty.
My patron! my commander! yes, 't is he!
Call out the guards. The Lord Kiuprili comes.

Drums beat. etc. the Guard turns out. Enter RAAB KIUPRILI.

RAAB KIUPRILI (*making a signal to stop the drums, etc.*).
Silence! enough! This is no time, young friend!
For ceremonious dues. The summoning drum,
Th' air-shattering trumpet, and the horseman's clatter,
Are insults to a dying sovereign's ear.
Soldiers, 't is well! Retire! your general greets you,
His loyal fellow-warriors. [*Guards retire.*

CHEF RAGOZZI.

Pardon my surprise.
Thus sudden from the camp, and unattended!
What may these wonders prophecy?

RAAB KIUPRILI.

Tell me first,
How fares the king? His majesty still lives?

CHEF RAGOZZI.

We know no otherwise; but Emerick's friends
(And none but they approach him) scoff at hope.

RAAB KIUPRILI.

Ragozzi! I have rear'd thee from a child,
And *as* a child I have rear'd thee. Whence this air
Of mystery? That face was wont to open
Clear as the morning to me, showing all things.
Hide nothing from me.

CHEF RAGOZZI.

O most loved, most honour'd,
The mystery, that struggles in my looks,
Betray'd my whole tale to thee, if it told thee
That I am ignorant; but fear the worst.
And mystery is contagious. All things here
Are full of motion: and yet all is silent:
And bad men's hopes infect the good with fears.

RAAB KIUPRILI (*his hand to his heart*).
I have trembling proof within, how true thou speakest.

CHEF RAGOZZI.

That the prince Emerick feasts the soldiery,
Gives splendid arms, pays the commanders' debts,
And (it is whisper'd) by sworn promises
Makes himself debtor—hearing this, thou hast heard
All——— (*Then in a subdued and saddened voice.*)
But what my lord will learn too soon himself.

RAAB KIUPRILI.

Ha!—Well then, let it come! Worse scarce can come.
This letter, written by the trembling hand
Of royal Andreas, calls me from the camp

To his immediate presence. It appoints me,
The Queen, and Emerick, guardians of the realm,
And of the royal infant. Day by day,
Robb'd of Zapolya's soothing cares, the king
Yearns only to behold one precious boon,
And with his life breathe forth a father's blessing.

CHEF RAGOZZI.

Remember you, my lord! that Hebrew leech,
Whose face so much distemper'd you?

RAAB KIUPRILI.

Barzoni?
I held him for a spy; but the proof failing
(More courteously, I own, than pleased myself),
I sent him from the camp.

CHEF RAGOZZI.

To him in chief
Prince Emerick trusts his royal brother's health.

RAAB KIUPRILI.

Hide nothing, I conjure you! What of him?

CHEF RAGOZZI.

With pomp of words beyond a soldier's cunning,
And shrugs and wrinkled brow, he smiles and whispers!
Talks in dark words of women's fancies; hints
That 't were a useless and cruel zeal
To rob a dying man of any hope,
However vain, that soothes him: and, in fine,
Denies all chance of offspring from the Queen.

RAAB KIUPRILI.

The venomous snake! My heel was on its head,
And (fool!) I did not crush it!

CHEF RAGOZZI.

Nay, he fears,
Zapolya will not long survive her husband.

RAAB KIUPRILI.

Manifest treason! Even this brief delay
Half makes me an accomplice——(If he live),
[*Is moving toward the palace.*
If he but live and know me, all may——

CHEF RAGOZZI.

Halt! [*Stops him.*
On pain of death, my Lord! am I commanded
To stop all ingress to the palace.

RAAB KIUPRILI.

Thou!

CHEF RAGOZZI.

No place, no name, no rank excepted—

RAAB KIUPRILI.

Thou!

CHEF RAGOZZI.

This life of mine, O take it, Lord Kiuprili!
I give it as a weapon to *thy* hands,
Mine own no longer. Guardian of Illyria,
Useless to thee 't is worthless to myself.
Thou art the framer of my nobler being:
Nor does there live one virtue in my soul,
One honourable hope, but calls thee father.
Yet ere thou dost resolve, know that yon palace
Is guarded from within, that each access
Is throng'd by arm'd conspirators, watch'd by ruffians
Pamper'd with gifts, and hot upon the spoil
Which that false promiser still trails before them.
I ask but this one boon—reserve my life
Till I can lose it for the realm and thee!

RAAB KIUPRILI.

My heart is rent asunder. O my country,
O fallen Illyria! stand I here spell-bound?
Did my King love me? Did I earn his love?
Have we embraced as brothers would embrace?
Was I his arm, his thunder-bolt? And now
Must I, hag-ridden, pant as in a dream?
Or, like an eagle, whose strong wings press up
Against a coiling serpent's folds, can I
Strike but for mockery, and with restless beak
Gore my own breast?—Ragozzi, thou art faithful?

CHEF RAGOZZI.

Here before Heaven I dedicate my faith
To the royal line of Andreas.

RAAB KIUPRILI.

Hark, Ragozzi!
Guilt is a timorous thing ere perpetration:
Despair alone makes wicked men be bold.
Come thou with me! They have heard my voice in flight,
Have faced round, terror-struck, and fear'd no longer
The whistling javelins of their fell pursuers.
Ha! what is this?
[*Black Flag displayed from the Tower of the Palace: a death-bell tolls, etc.*
Vengeance of Heaven! He is dead.

CHEF RAGOZZI.

At length then 't is announced. Alas! I fear,
That these black death-flags are but treason's signals.

RAAB KIUPRILI (*looking forwards anxiously*).

A prophecy too soon fulfill'd! See yonder!
O rank and ravenous wolves! the death-bell echoes
Still in the doleful air—and see! they come.

CHEF RAGOZZI.

Precise and faithful in their villany,
Even to the moment, that the master traitor
Had pre-ordain'd them.

RAAB KIUPRILI.

Was it over-haste,
Or is it scorn, that in this race of treason
Their guilt thus drops its mask, and blazons forth
Their infamous plot even to an idiot's sense.

CHEF RAGOZZI.

Doubtless they deem Heaven too usurp'd! Heaven's justice
Bought like themselves!
[*During this conversation music is heard, first solemn and funereal, and then changing to spirited and triumphal.*
Being equal all in crime,
Do you press on, ye spotted parricides!
For the one sole pre-eminence yet doubtful,
The prize of foremost impudence in guilt?

RAAB KIUPRILI.

The bad man's cunning still prepares the way
For its own outwitting. I applaud, Ragozzi!
[*Musing to himself—then—*
Ragozzi! I applaud,
In thee, the virtuous hope that dares look onward
And keeps the life-spark warm of future action
Beneath the cloak of patient sufferance.
Act and appear as time and prudence prompt thee:
I shall not misconceive the part thou playest.
Mine is an easier part—to brave the Usurper.
[*Enter a procession of* EMERICK'S *Adherents, Nobles, Chieftains, and Soldiers, with Music. They advance toward the front of the Stage,* KIUPRILI *makes the signal for them to stop.—The Music ceases.*

LEADER OF THE PROCESSION.

The Lord Kiuprili!—Welcome from the camp.

RAAB KIUPRILI.

Grave magistrates and chieftains of Illyria!
In good time come ye hither, if ye come
As loyal men with honourable purpose
To mourn what can alone be mourn'd; but chiefly
To enforce the last commands of royal Andreas,
And shield the Queen, Zapolya: haply making
The mother's joy light up the widow's tears.

LEADER.

Our purpose demands speed. Grace our procession;
A warrior best will greet a warlike king.

RAAB KIUPRILI.

This patent, written by your *lawful* king
(Lo! his own seal and signature attesting)
Appoints as guardians of his realm and offspring,
The Queen, and the Prince Emerick, and myself.
[*Voices of Live King Emerick! an Emerick! an Emerick!*
What means this clamour? Are these madmen's voices?
Or is some knot of riotous slanderers leagued
To infamize the name of the king's brother
With a lie black as Hell? unmanly cruelty,
Ingratitude, and most unnatural treason! [*Murmurs.*
What mean these murmurs? Dare then any here
Proclaim Prince Emerick a spotted traitor?
One that has taken from you your sworn faith,
And given you in return a Judas' bribe,
Infamy now, oppression in reversion,
And Heaven's inevitable curse hereafter?
[*Loud murmurs, followed by cries—Emerick! No Baby Prince! No Changelings!*
Yet bear with me awhile! Have I for this
Bled for your safety, conquer'd for your honour!
Was it for this, Illyrians! that I forded
Your thaw-swoln torrents, when the shouldering ice
Fought with the foe, and stain'd its jagged points
With gore from wounds, I felt not? Did the blast
Beat on this body, frost-and-famine-numb'd,
Till my hard flesh distinguish'd not itself
From the insensate mail, its fellow-warrior?
And have I brought home with me Victory,
And with her, hand in hand, firm-footed Peace,
Her countenance twice lighted up with glory.
As if I had charm'd a goddess down from Heaven?
But these will flee abhorrent from the throne
Of usurpation!
[*Murmurs increase—and cries of Onward! onward!*
Have you then thrown off shame,
And shall not a dear friend, a loyal subject,
Throw off all fear? I tell ye, the fair trophies
Valiantly wrested from a valiant foe,
Love's natural offerings to a rightful king,
Will hang as ill on this usurping traitor,
This brother-blight, this Emerick, as robes
Of gold pluck'd from the images of gods
Upon a sacrilegious robber's back.
[*During the last four lines, enter* LORD CASIMIR, *with expressions of anger and alarm.*

CASIMIR.

Who is this factious insolent, that dares brand
The elected King, our chosen Emerick?
[*Starts—then approaching with timid respect.*
My father!

RAAB KIUPRILI (*turning away*).

Casimir! He, he a traitor!
Too soon indeed, Ragozzi! have I learnt it. [*Aside.*

CASIMIR (*with reverence*).

My father and my lord!

RAAB KIUPRILI.

I know thee not!

LEADER.

Yet the remembrancing did sound right filial.

RAAB KIUPRILI.

A holy name and words of natural duty
Are blasted by a thankless traitor's utterance.

CASIMIR.

O hear me, Sire! not lightly have I sworn
Homage to Emerick. Illyria's sceptre
Demands a manly hand, a warrior's grasp.
The queen Zapolya's self-expected offspring
At least is doubtful: and of all our nobles,
The king inheriting his brother's heart,
Hath honour'd us the most. *Your* rank, my lord!
Already eminent, is—all it can be—
Confirmed: and me the king's grace hath appointed
Chief of his council and the lord high steward.

RAAB KIUPRILI.

(Bought by a bribe!) I know thee now still less.

CASIMIR (*struggling with his passion*).

So much of Raab Kiuprili's blood flows here,
That no power, save that holy name of father,
Could shield the man who so dishonour'd me.

RAAB KIUPRILI.

The son of Raab Kiuprili! a bought bond-slave,
Guilt's pander, treason's mouth-piece, a gay parrot,
School'd to shrill forth his feeder's usurp'd titles,
And scream, Long live king Emerick!

LEADERS.

Aye, King Emerick!
Stand back, my lord! Lead us, or let us pass.

SOLDIER.

Nay, let the general speak!

SOLDIERS.

Hear him! Hear him!

RAAB KIUPRILI.

Hear me,
Assembled lords and warriors of Illyria,
Hear, and avenge me! Twice ten years have I
Stood in your presence, honour'd by the king,
Beloved and trusted. Is there one among you,
Accuses Raab Kiuprili of a bribe?
Or one false whisper in his sovereign's ear?
Who here dares charge me with an orphan's rights
Outfaced, or widow's plea left undefended?
And shall I now be branded by a traitor,
A bought bribed wretch, who, being called *my* son,
Doth libel a chaste matron's name, and plant
Hensbane and aconite on a mother's grave?
The underling accomplice of a robber,
That from a widow and a widow's offspring
Would steal their heritage? To God a rebel,
And to the common father of his country
A recreant ingrate!

CASIMIR.

Sire! your words grow dangerous.
High-flown romantic fancies ill-beseem
Your age and wisdom. 'T is a statesman's virtue,
To guard his country's safety by what means

It best may be protected—come what will
Of these monks' morals!

RAAB KIUPRILI (*aside*).

Ha! the elder Brutus
Made his soul iron, though *his* sons repented.
They boasted not *their* baseness.
[*Starts, and draws his sword.*
Infamous changeling!
Recant this instant, and swear loyalty,
And strict obedience to thy sovereign's will;
Or, by the spirit of departed Andreas,
Thou diest——

[*Chiefs, etc. rush to interpose; during the tumult enter* EMERICK, *alarmed.*

EMERICK.

Call out the guard! Ragozzi! seize the assassin.——
Kiuprili? Ha!——[*With lowered voice, at the same time with one hand making signs to the guard to retire.*——
Pass on, friends! to the palace.

[*Music recommences.—The Procession passes into the Palace.—During which time* EMERICK *and* KIUPRILI *regard each other stedfastly.*

EMERICK.

What! Raab Kiuprili? What! a father's sword
Against his own son's breast?

RAAB KIUPRILI.

'T would best excuse him,
Were he *thy* son, Prince Emerick. *I* abjure him.

EMERICK.

This is my thanks, then, that I have commenced
A reign to which the free voice of the nobles
Hath call'd me, and the people, by regards
Of love and grace to Raab Kiuprili's house?

RAAB KIUPRILI.

What right hadst thou, Prince Emerick, to bestow them?

EMERICK.

By what right dares Kiuprili question me?

RAAB KIUPRILI.

By a right common to all loyal subjects—
To *me* a duty! As the realm's co-regent,
Appointed by our sovereign's last free act,
Writ by himself.— [*Grasping the Patent.*

EMERICK (*With a contemptuous sneer*).

Aye!—Writ in a delirium!

RAAB KIUPRILI.

I likewise ask, by whose authority
The access to the sovereign was refused me?

EMERICK.

By whose authority dared the general leave
His camp and army, like a fugitive?

RAAB KIUPRILI.

A fugitive, who, with victory for his comrade,
Ran, open-eyed, upon the face of death!
A fugitive, with no other fear, than bodements
To be belated in a loyal purpose—
At the command, Prince! of *my* king and thine,
Hither I came; and now again require
Audience of Queen Zapolya; and (the States
Forthwith convened) that thou dost show at large,
On what ground of defect thou'st dared annul
This thy King's last and solemn act—hast dared
Ascend the throne, of which the law had named,
And conscience should have made thee, a protector.

EMERICK.

A sovereign's ear ill brooks a subject's questioning!
Yet for thy past well-doing—and because
'T is hard to erase at once the fond belief
Long cherish'd, that Illyria had in thee
No dreaming priest's slave, but a Roman lover
Of her true weal and freedom—and for this, too,
That, hoping to call forth to the broad day-light
And fostering breeze of glory all deservings,
I still had placed *thee* foremost.

RAAB KIUPRILI.

Prince! I listen.

EMERICK.

Unwillingly I tell thee, that Zapolya,
Madden'd with grief, her erring hopes proved idle—

CASIMIR.

Sire! speak the whole truth! Say, her *frauds* detected!

EMERICK.

According to the sworn attests in council
Of her physician——

RAAB KIUPRILI (*aside*).

Yes! the Jew, Barzoni!

EMERICK.

Under the imminent risk of death she lies,
Or irrecoverable loss of reason,
If known friend's face or voice renew the frenzy.

CASIMIR (*to* KIUPRILI).

Trust me, my lord! a woman's trick has duped you—
Us too—but most of all, the sainted Andreas.
Even for his own fair fame, his grace prays hourly
For her recovery, that (the States convened)
She may take council of her friends.

EMERICK.

Right, Casimir!
Receive my pledge, lord general. It shall stand
In her own will to appear and voice her claims;
Or (which in truth I hold the wiser course)
With all the past passed by, as family quarrels,
Let the Queen Dowager, with unblench'd honours,
Resume her state, our first Illyrian matron.

RAAB KIUPRILI.

Prince Emerick! you *speak* fairly, and your pledge too
Is such, as well would suit an honest meaning.

CASIMIR.

My lord! you scarce know half his grace's goodness.
The wealthy heiress, high-born fair Sarolta,
Bred in the convent of our noble ladies,
Her relative, the venerable abbess,
Hath, at his grace's urgence, woo'd and won for me.

EMERICK.

Long may the race, and long may that name flourish,
Which your heroic deeds, brave chief, have render'd
Dear and illustrious to all true Illyrians!

RAAB KIUPRILI (*sternly*).

The longest line, that ever tracing herald
Or found or feign'd, placed by a beggar's soul,
Hath but a mushroom's date in the comparison:
And with the soul, the conscience is co-eval,
Yea, the soul's essence.

EMERICK.

Conscience, good my lord,
Is but the pulse of reason. Is it conscience,
That a free nation should be handed down,
Like the dull clods beneath our feet, by chance
And the blind law of lineage? That whether infant,
Or man matured, a wise man or an idiot,

Hero or natural coward, shall have guidance
Of a free people's destiny; should fall out
In the mere lottery of a reckless nature,
Where few the prizes and the blanks are countless?
Or haply that a nation's fate should hang
On the bald accident of a midwife's handling
The unclosed sutures of an infant's skull?

CASIMIR.

What better claim can sovereign wish or need,
Than the free voice of men who love their country?
Those chiefly who have fought for 't? Who by right,
Claim for their monarch one, who having obey'd,
So hath best learnt to govern: who, having suffer'd,
Can feel for each brave sufferer and reward him?
Whence sprang the name of Emperor? Was it not
By nature's fiat? In the storm of triumph,
'Mid warriors' shouts, did her oracular voice
Make itself heard: Let the commanding spirit
Possess the station of command!

RAAB KIUPRILI.

Prince Emerick,
Your cause will prosper best in your own pleading.

EMERICK (*aside to* CASIMIR).

Ragozzi was thy school-mate—a bold spirit!
Bind him to us!—Thy father thaws apace!
[*Then aloud.*
Leave us awhile, my lord!—Your friend, Ragozzi,
Whom you have not yet seen since his return,
Commands the guard to-day.

[*Casimir retires to the Guard-house; and after a time appears before it with* CHEF RAGOZZI.

We are alone.
What further pledge or proof desires Kiuprili?
Then, with your assent——

RAAB KIUPRILI.

Mistake not for assent
The unquiet silence of a stern Resolve,
Throttling the impatient voice. I have heard thee, Prince!
And I have watch'd thee, too; but have small faith in
A plausible tale told with a flitting eye.

[EMERICK *turns as about to call for the Guard.*

In the next moment I am in thy power,
In this thou art in mine. Stir but a step,
Or make one sign—I swear by this good sword,
Thou diest that instant.

EMERICK.

Ha, ha!—Well, Sir!—Conclude your homily.

RAAB KIUPRILI (*in a somewhat suppressed voice.*)

A tale which, whether true or false, comes guarded
Against all means of proof, detects itself.
The Queen mew'd up—this too from anxious care
And love brought forth of a sudden, a twin birth
With thy discovery of her plot to rob thee
Of a rightful throne!—Mark how the scorpion, falsehood,
Coils round in its own perplexity, and fixes
Its sting in its own head!

EMERICK.

Aye! to the mark!

RAAB KIUPRILI (*aloud*): [*he and* EMERICK *standing at equi-distance from the Palace and the Guard-House.*

Hadst thou believed thine own tale, hadst thou *fancied*
Thyself the rightful successor of Andreas,
Wouldst thou have pilfer'd from our school-boys' themes
These shallow sophisms of a *popular choice*?
What people? How convened? or, if convened,
Must not the magic power that charms together
Millions of men in council, needs have power
To win or wield them? Better, O far better
Shout forth thy titles to yon circling mountains,
And with a thousand-fold reverberation
Make the rocks flatter thee, and the volleying air,
Unbribed, shout back to thee, King Emerick!
By wholesome laws to embank the sovereign power,
To deepen by restraint, and by prevention
Of lawless will to amass and guide the flood
In its majestic channel, is man's task.
And the true patriot's glory! In all else
Men safelier trust to Heaven, than to themselves
When least themselves in the mad whirl of crowds
Where folly is contagious, and too oft
Even wise men leave their better sense at home,
To chide and wonder at them when return'd.

EMERICK (*aloud*).

Is 't thus, thou scoff'st the people! most of all,
The soldiers, the defenders of the people?

RAAB KIUPRILI (*aloud*).

O most of all, most miserable nation,
For whom th' Imperial power, enormous bubble!
Is blown and kept aloft, or burst and shatter'd
By the bribed breath of a lewd soldiery!
Chiefly of such, as from the frontiers far
(Which is the noblest station of true warriors),
In rank licentious idleness beleaguer
City and court, a venom'd thorn i' the side
Of virtuous kings, the tyrant's slave and tyrant,
Still ravening for fresh largess! But with such
What title claim'st thou, save thy birth? What merits
Which many a liegeman may not plead as well,
Brave though I grant thee? If a life outlabour'd
Head, heart, and fortunate arm, in watch and war,
For the land's fame and weal; if large acquests,
Made honest by th' aggression of the foe
And whose best praise is, that they bring us safety;
If victory, doubly-wreathed, whose under-garland
Of laurel-leaves looks greener and more sparkling
Through the grey olive-branch; if these, Prince Emerick!
Give the true title to the throne, not *thou*—
No! (let Illyria, let the infidel enemy
Be judge and arbiter between us!) I,
I were the rightful sovereign!

EMERICK.

I have faith
That thou both think'st and hopest it. Fair Zapolya,
A provident lady—

RAAB KIUPRILI.

Wretch, beneath all answer!

EMERICK.

Offers at once the royal bed and throne!

RAAB KIUPRILI.

To be a kingdom's bulwark, a king's glory,
Yet loved by both, and trusted, and trust-worthy,
Is more than to be king; but see! thy rage
Fights with thy fear. I will relieve thee! Ho!
[*To the Guard.*

EMERICK.

Not for thy sword, but to entrap thee, ruffian!

Thus long I have listen'd—Guard—ho! from the Palace.

[*The Guard post from the Guard-House with* CHEF RAGOZZI *at their head, and then a number from the Palace—*CHEF RAGOZZI *demands* KIUPRILI's *sword, and apprehends him.*

CASIMIR.

O agony! (*To* EMERICK.) Sire, hear me!

[*To* KIUPRILI, *who turns from him.*

Hear me, Father!

EMERICK.

Take in arrest that traitor and assassin!
Who pleads for *his* life, strikes at mine, his sovereign's.

RAAB KIUPRILI.

As the co-regent of the realm, I stand
Amenable to none save to the States,
Met in due course of law. But ye are bond-slaves,
Yet witness ye that before God and man
I here impeach Lord Emerick of foul treason,
And on strong grounds attaint him with suspicion
Of murder—

EMERICK.

Hence with the madman!

RAAB KIUPRILI.

Your Queen's murder,
The royal orphan's murder: and to the death
Defy him, as a tyrant and usurper.

[*Hurried off by* RAGOZZI *and the Guard.*

EMERICK.

Ere twice the sun hath risen, by my sceptre
This insolence shall be avenged.

CASIMIR.

O banish him!
This infamy will crush me. O for my sake,
Banish him, my liege lord!

EMERICK (*scornfully*).

What? to the army?
Be calm, young friend! Nought shall be done in anger.
The child o'er-powers the man. In this emergence
I must take counsel for us both. Retire.

[*Exit* CASIMIR *in agitation.*

EMERICK (*alone, looks at a Calendar*).

The changeful planet, now in her decay,
Dips down at midnight, to be seen no more.
With her shall sink the enemies of Emerick,
Cursed by the last look of the waning moon:
And my bright destiny, with sharpen'd horns,
Shall greet me fearless in the new-born crescent.

[*Exit.*

Scene changes to another view, namely, the back of the Palace—a Wooded Park, and Mountains.

Enter ZAPOLYA, *with an Infant in her arms.*

ZAPOLYA.

Hush, dear one! hush! My trembling arm disturbs thee!
Thou, the Protector of the helpless! thou,
The widow's Husband and the orphan's Father,
Direct my steps! Ah whither? O send down
Thy angel to a houseless babe and mother,
Driven forth into the cruel wilderness!
Hush, sweet one! Thou art no Hagar's offspring: Thou art
The rightful heir of an anointed king!
What sounds are those? It is the vesper chaunt
Of labouring men returning to their home!
Their queen has no home! Hear me, heavenly Father!
And let this darkness——
Be as the shadow of thy outspread wings
To hide and shield us! Start'st thou in thy slumbers?
Thou canst not dream of savage Emerick. Hush!
Betray not thy poor mother! For if they seize thee
I shall grow mad indeed, and they 'll believe
Thy wicked uncle's lie. Ha! what? A soldier?

[*She starts back—and enter* CHEF RAGOZZI.

CHEF RAGOZZI.

Sure heaven befriends us. Well! he hath escaped!
O rare tune of a tyrant's promises
That can enchant the serpent treachery
From forth its lurking-hole in the heart. «*Ragozzi!*
«*O brave Ragozzi! Count! Commander! What not?*»
And all this too for nothing! a poor nothing!
Merely to play the underling in the murder
Of my best friend Kiuprili! His own son—monstrous!
Tyrant! I owe thee thanks, and in good hour
Will I repay thee, for that thou thought'st *me* too
A serviceable villain. Could I now
But gain some sure intelligence of the queen:
Heaven bless and guard her!

ZAPOLYA (*coming fearfully forward*).

Art thou not Ragozzi?

CHEF RAGOZZI.

The Queen! Now then the miracle is full!
I see heaven's wisdom is an over-match
For the devil's cunning. This way, madam, haste!

ZAPOLYA.

Stay! Oh, no! Forgive me if I wrong thee!
This is thy sovereign's child: Oh, pity us,
And be not treacherous! [*Kneeling.*

CHEF RAGOZZI (*raising her*).

Madam! For mercy's sake!

ZAPOLYA.

But tyrants have an hundred eyes and arms!

CHEF RAGOZZI.

Take courage, madam! 'T were too horrible,
(I can not do't) to swear I'm not a monster!—
Scarce had I barr'd the door on Raab Kiuprili—

ZAPOLYA.

Kiuprili! How?

CHEF RAGOZZI.

There is not time to tell it,
The tyrant call'd me to him, praised my zeal
(And be assured I overtopt his cunning
And seemed right zealous). But time wastes: In fine,
Bids me dispatch my trustiest friends, as couriers
With letters to the army. The thought at once
Flash'd on me. I disguised my prisoner—

ZAPOLYA.

What! Raab Kiuprili?

CHEF RAGOZZI.

Yes! my noble general!
I sent *him* off, with Emerick's own packet,
Haste, and post haste—Prepared to follow him——

ZAPOLYA.

Ah, how? Is it joy or fear! My limbs seem sinking!—

CHEF RAGOZZI (*supporting her*).

Heaven still befriends us. I have left my charger,
A gentle beast and fleet, and my boy's mule,
One that can shoot a precipice like a bird,
Just where the wood begins to climb the mountains.
The course we'll thread will mock the tyrant's guesses,
Or scare the followers. Ere we reach the main road,
The Lord Kiuprili will have sent a troop

To escort me. Oh, thrice happy when he finds
The treasure which I convoy!

ZAPOLYA.

One brief moment,
That, praying for strength I may *have* strength. This babe,
Heaven's eye is on it, and its innocence
Is, as a prophet's prayer, strong and prevailing!
Through thee, dear babe! the inspiring thought possess'd me,
When the loud clamour rose, and all the palace
Emptied itself—(They sought my life, Ragozzi!)
Like a swift shadow gliding, I made way
To the deserted chamber of my lord.—
[*Then to the infant.*
And thou didst kiss thy father's lifeless lips,
And in thy helpless hand, sweet slumberer!
Still clasp'st the signet of thy royalty.
As I removed the seal, the heavy arm
Dropt from the couch aslant, and the stiff finger
Seem'd pointing at my feet. Provident Heaven!
Lo, I was standing on the secret door,
Which, through a long descent where all sound perishes,
Let out beyond the palace. Well I knew it——
But *Andreas* framed it not! *He* was no tyrant!

CHEF RAGOZZI.

Haste, madam! Let me take this precious burden!
[*He kneels as he takes the child.*

ZAPOLYA.

Take him! And if we be pursued, I charge thee,
Flee thou and leave me! Flee and save thy king!
[*Then as going off, she looks back on the palace.*
Thou tyrant's den, be call'd no more a palace!
The orphan's angel at the throne of heaven
Stands up against thee, and there hover o'er thee
A Queen's, a Mother's, and a Widow's curse.
Henceforth a dragon's haunt, fear and suspicion
Stand sentry at thy portals! Faith and honour,
Driven from the throne, shall leave the attainted nation:
And, for the iniquity that houses in thee,
False glory, thirst of blood, and lust of rapine
(Fateful conjunction of malignant planets),
Shall shoot their blastments on the land. The fathers
Henceforth shall have no joy in their young men,
And when they cry: *Lo! a male child is born!*
The mother shall make answer with a groan.
For bloody usurpation, like a vulture,
Shall clog its beak within Illyria's heart.
Remorseless slaves of a remorseless tyrant!
They shall be mock'd with *sounds* of liberty,
And liberty shall be proclaim'd alone
To thee, O Fire! O Pestilence! O Sword!
Till Vengeance hath her fill.—And thou, snatch'd hence,
(*Again to the infant.*) poor friendless fugitive! with mother's wailing,
Offspring of Royal Andreas, shalt return
With trump and timbrel clang, and popular shout
In triumph to the palace of thy fathers! [*Exeunt.*

PART II.

THE SEQUEL, ENTITLED «THE USURPER'S FATE.»

ADDITIONAL CHARACTERS.

MEN.

OLD BATHORY, *a Mountaineer.*
BETHLEN BATHORY, *the Young Prince Andreas, supposed Son of Old Bathory.*
LORD RUDOLPH, *a Courtier, but friend to the Queen's party.*
LASKA, *Steward to Casimir, betrothed to Glycine.*
PESTALUTZ, *an Assassin, in Emerick's employ.*

WOMEN.

LADY SAROLTA, *Wife of Lord Casimir.*
GLYCINE, *Orphan Daughter of Chef Ragozzi.*

Between the flight of the Queen, and the civil war which immediately followed, and in which Emerick remained the victor, a space of twenty years is supposed to have elapsed.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

A Mountainous Country. BATHORY'S *Dwelling at the end of the Stage.*

Enter LADY SAROLTA *and* GLYCINE.

GLYCINE.

WELL, then! our round of charity is finish'd.
Rest, Madam! You breathe quick.

SAROLTA.

What! tired, Glycine?
No delicate court dame, but a mountaineer
By choice no less than birth, I gladly use
The good strength nature gave me.

GLYCINE.

That last cottage
Is built as if an eagle or a raven
Had chosen it for her nest.

SAROLTA.

So many are
The sufferings which no human aid can reach,
It needs must be a duty doubly sweet
To heal the few we can. Well! let us rest.

GLYCINE.

There? [*Pointing to* BATHORY'S *dwelling.* SAROLTA *answering, points to where she then stands.*

SAROLTA.

Here! For on this spot Lord Casimir
Took his last leave. On yonder mountain-ridge
I lost the misty image which so long
Linger'd, or seem'd at least to linger on it.

GLYCINE.

And what if even now, on that same ridge,
A speck should rise, and still enlarging, lengthening,
As it clomb downwards, shape itself at last
To a numerous cavalcade, and spurring foremost,
Who but Sarolta's own dear lord return'd
From his high embassy?

SAROLTA.

Thou hast hit my thought!
All the long day, from yester-morn to evening,
The restless hope flutter'd about my heart.
Oh, we are querulous creatures! Little less
Than all things can suffice to make us happy;
And little more than nothing is enough
To discontent us.—Were he come, then should I
Repine he had not arrived just one day earlier
To keep his birth-day here, in his own birth-place.

GLYCINE.

But our best sports belike, and gay processions
Would to my lord have seem'd but work-day sights
Compared with those the royal court affords.

SAROLTA.

I have small wish to see them. A spring morning,
With its wild gladsome minstrelsy of birds,
And its bright jewelry of flowers and dew-drops
(Each orbed drop an orb of glory in it),
Would put them all in eclipse. This sweet retirement
Lord Casimir's wish alone would have made sacred:
But in good truth, his loving jealousy
Did but command, what I had else entreated.

GLYCINE.

And yet had I been born Lady Sarolta,
Been wedded to the noblest of the realm,
So beautiful besides, and yet so stately——

SAROLTA.

Hush! innocent flatterer!

GLYCINE.

Nay! to my poor fancy
The royal court would seem an earthly heaven,
Made for such stars to shine in, and be gracious.

SAROLTA.

So doth the ignorant distance still delude us!
Thy fancied heaven, dear girl, like that above thee,
In its mere self a cold, drear, colourless void,
Seen from below and in the large, becomes
The bright blue ether, and the seat of gods!
Well! but this broil that scared you from the dance?
And was not Laska there: he, your betrothed?

GLYCINE.

Yes, madam! he was there. So was the maypole,
For we danced round it.

SAROLTA.

Ah, Glycine! why,
Why did you then betroth yourself?

GLYCINE.

Because
My own dear lady wished it! 't was *you* asked me!

SAROLTA.

Yes, at my lord's request, but never wish'd,
My poor affectionate girl, to see thee wretched.
Thou know'st not yet the duties of a wife.

GLYCINE.

Oh, yes! It is a wife's chief duty, madam,
To stand in awe of her husband, and obey him;
And, I am sure, I never shall see Laska
But I shall tremble.

SAROLTA.

Not with fear, I think,
For you still mock him. Bring a seat from the cottage.

[*Exit* GLYCINE *into the cottage,* SAROLTA *continues her speech looking after her.*

Something above thy rank there hangs about thee,
And in thy countenance, thy voice, and motion,
Yea, e'en in thy simplicity, Glycine,
A fine and feminine grace, that makes me feel
More as a mother than a mistress to thee!
Thou art a soldier's orphan! that—the courage,
Which rising in thine eye, seems oft to give
A new soul to its gentleness, doth prove thee!
Thou art sprung too of no ignoble blood,
Or there 's no faith in instinct!

[*Angry voices and clamour within, re-enter* GLYCINE.

GLYCINE.

Oh, madam! there 's a party of your servants,
And my lord's steward, Laska, at their head,
Have come to search for old Bathory's son,
Bethlen, that brave young man! 't was he, my lady,
That took our parts, and beat off the intruders;
And in mere spite and malice, now they charge him
With bad words of Lord Casimir and the king.
Pray don't believe them, madam! This way! This way!
Lady Sarolta 's *here.* [*Calling without.*

SAROLTA.

Be calm, Glycine.

Enter LASKA *and Servants with* OLD BATHORY.

LASKA (*to* BATHORY).

We have no concern with you! What needs your presence?

OLD BATHORY.

What! Do you think I 'll suffer my brave boy
To be slander'd by a set of coward-ruffians,
And leave it to their malice,—yes, mere malice!—
To tell its own tale?

[LASKA *and Servants bow to* LADY SAROLTA.

SAROLTA.

Laska! What may this mean?

LASKA (*pompously, as commencing a set speech*).

Madam! and may it please your ladyship!
This old man's son, by name Bethlen Bathory,
Stands charged, on weighty evidence, that he,
On yester-eve, being his lordship's birth-day,
Did traitorously defame Lord Casimir:
The lord high-steward of the realm, moreover——

SAROLTA.

Be brief! We know his titles!

LASKA.

And moreover
Raved like a traitor at our liege King Emerick.
And furthermore, said witnesses make oath,
Led on the assault upon his lordship's servants;
Yea, insolently tore, from this, your huntsman,
His badge of livery of your noble house,
And trampled it in scorn.

SAROLTA (*to the Servants who offer to speak*).

You have had your spokesman!
Where is the young man thus accused?

OLD BATHORY.

I know not:
But if no ill betide him on the mountains,
He will not long be absent!

SAROLTA.

Thou art his father?

OLD BATHORY.

None ever with more reason prized a son;
Yet I hate falsehood more than I love him.
But more than one, now in my lady's presence,
Witness'd the affray, besides these men of malice;
And if I swerve from truth——

GLYCINE.

Yes! good old man!
My lady! pray believe him!

SAROLTA.

Hush, Glycine!
Be silent, I command you. [*Then to* BATHORY.
Speak! we hear you!

OLD BATHORY.

My tale is brief. During our festive dance,
Your servants, the accusers of my son,
Offer'd gross insults, in unmanly sort,
To our village maidens. He (could he do less?)
Rose in defence of outraged modesty,
And so persuasive did his cudgel prove
(Your hectoring sparks so over brave to women
Are always cowards), that they soon took flight,
And now in mere revenge, like baffled boasters,
Have framed this tale, out of some hasty words
Which their own threats provoked.

SAROLTA.

Old man! you talk
Too bluntly! Did your son owe no respect
To the livery of our house?

OLD BATHORY.

Even such respect
As the sheep's skin should gain for the hot wolf
That hath began to worry the poor lambs!

LASKA.

Old insolent ruffian!

GLYCINE.

Pardon! pardon, madam!
I saw the whole affray. The good old man
Means no offence, sweet lady!—You, yourself,
Laska! know well, that these men were the ruffians!
Shame on you!

SAROLTA (*speaks with affected anger*).

What! Glycine? Go, retire!
[*Exit* GLYCINE, *mournfully*.
Be it then that these men faulted. Yet yourself,
Or better still belike the maidens' parents,
Might have complain'd to *us*. Was ever access
Denied you? Or free audience? Or are we
Weak and unfit to punish our own servants?

OLD BATHORY.

So then! So then! Heaven grant an old man patience!
And must the gardener leave his seedling plants,
Leave his young roses to the rooting swine,
While he goes ask their master, if perchance
His leisure serve to scourge them from their ravage?

LASKA.

Ho! Take the rude clown from your lady's presence!
I will report her further will!

SAROLTA.

Wait then,
Till thou hast learnt it! Fervent good old man!
Forgive me that, to try thee, I put on
A face of sternness, alien to my meaning!
[*Then speaks to the Servants.*
Hence! leave my presence! and you, Laska! mark me!
Those rioters are no longer of my household!
If we but shake a dew-drop from a rose
In vain would we replace it, and as vainly
Restore the tear of wounded modesty
To a maiden's eye familiarized to licence.—
But these men, Laska—

LASKA (*aside*).

Yes, now 't is coming.

SAROLTA.

Brutal aggressors first, then baffled dastards,
That they have sought to piece out their revenge
With a tale of words lured from the lips of anger
Stamps them most dangerous; and till I want
Fit means for wicked ends, we shall not need
Their services. Discharge them! You, Bathory!
Are henceforth of my household! I shall place you
Near my own person. When your son returns,
Present him to us!

OLD BATHORY.

Ha! what, strangers[1] here!
What business have they in an old man's eye?
Your goodness, lady—and it came so sudden—
I can not—must not—let you be deceived.
I have yet another tale, but— [*Then to* SAROLTA *aside*.
Not for all ears!

SAROLTA.

I oft have pass'd your cottage, and still praised
Its beauty, and that trim orchard-plot, whose blossoms
The gusts of April shower'd aslant its thatch.
Come, you shall show it me! And while you bid it
Farewell, be not ashamed that I should witness
The oil of gladness glittering on the water
Of an ebbing grief.
[BATHORY *bowing, shows her into his cottage.*

LASKA (*alone*).

Vexation! baffled! school'd!
Ho! Laska! wake! why? what can all this mean?
She sent away that cockatrice in anger!
Oh the false witch! It is too plain, she loves him.
And now, the old man near my lady's person,
She 'll see this Bethlen hourly!
[LASKA *flings himself into the seat.* GLYCINE *peeps in timidly.*

GLYCINE.

Laska! Laska!
Is my lady gone?

LASKA (*surlily*).

Gone.

GLYCINE.

Have you yet seen him?
Is he return'd?
[LASKA *starts up from his seat.*
Has the seat stung you, Laska?

LASKA.

No, serpent! no; 't is you that sting me; you!
What! you would cling to him again!

GLYCINE.

Whom?

LASKA.

Bethlen! Bethlen!
Yes; gaze as if your very eyes embraced him!
Ha! you forget the scene of yesterday!
Mute ere he came, but then—Out on your screams,
And your pretended fears!

GLYCINE.

Your fears, at least,
Were real, Laska! or your trembling limbs
And white cheeks played the hypocrites most vilely!

[1] Refers to the tear, which he feels starting in his eye. The following line was borrowed unconsciously from Mr Wordsworth's *Excursion*.

LASKA.

I fear! whom? What?

GLYCINE.

I know, what I should fear,
Were I in Laska's place.

LASKA.

What?

GLYCINE.

My own conscience,
For having fed my jealousy and envy
With a plot, made out of other men's revenges,
Against a brave and innocent young man's life!
Yet, yet, pray tell me!

LASKA (*malignantly*).

You will know too soon.

GLYCINE.

Would I could find my lady! though she chid me—
Yet this suspense— [*Going.*

LASKA.

Stop! stop! one question only—
I am quite calm—

GLYCINE.

Ay, as the old song says,
Calm as a tiger, valiant as a dove.
Nay now, I have marr'd the verse: well! this one question—

LASKA.

Are you not bound to me by your own promise?
And is it not as plain—

GLYCINE.

Halt! that's two questions.

LASKA.

Pshaw! Is it not as plain as impudence,
That you 're in love with this young swaggering beggar,
Bethlen Bathory? When he was accused,
Why press'd *you* forward? Why did *you* defend him?

GLYCINE.

Question meet question: that 's a woman's privilege.
Why, Laska, did *you* urge Lord Casimir
To make my lady force that promise from me?

LASKA.

So then, you say, Lady Sarolta *forced* you?

GLYCINE.

Could I look up to her dear countenance,
And say her nay? As far back as I wot of
All her commands were gracious, sweet requests.
How could it be then, but that her requests
Must needs have sounded to me as commands?
And as for love, had I a score of loves,
I'd keep them all for my dear, kind, good mistress.

LASKA.

Not one for Bethlen?

GLYCINE.

Oh! that 's a different thing.
To be sure he 's brave, and handsome, and so pious
To his good old father. But for *loving* him—
Nay, *there*, indeed you are mistaken, Laska!
Poor youth! I rather think I *grieve* for him;
For I sigh so deeply when I think of him!
And if I see him, the tears come in my eyes,
And my heart beats; and all because I dreamt
That the war-wolf[1] had gored him as he hunted
In the haunted forest!

[1] For the best account of the War-wolf or Lycanthropus, see Drayton's *Moon-calf*, Chalmers' *English Poets*, vol. iv, p. 13 &c.

LASKA.

You dare own all this?
Your lady will not warrant promise-breach.
Mine, pampered Miss! you shall be; and I 'll make you
Grieve for him with a vengeance. Odds, my fingers
Tingle already! [*Makes threatening signs.*

GLYCINE (*aside*).

Ha! Bethlen coming this way!
[Glycine *then cries out as if afraid of being beaten.*
Oh, save me! save me! Pray don't kill me, Laska!

Enter Bethlen *in a Hunting Dress.*

BETHLEN.

What, beat a woman!

LASKA (*to* Glycine).

O you cockatrice!

BETHLEN.

Unmanly dastard, hold!

LASKA (*pompously*).

Do you chance to know
Who—I—am, Sir?—(S'death! how black he looks!)

BETHLEN.

I have started many strange beasts in my time,
But none less like a man, than this before me
That lifts his hand against a timid female.

LASKA.

Bold youth! she 's mine.

GLYCINE.

No, not my master yet,
But only *is* to be; and all because
Two years ago my lady ask'd me, and
I promised *her*, not *him;* and if *she* 'll let me,
I 'll *hate* you, my lord's steward.

BETHLEN.

Hush, Glycine!

GLYCINE.

Yes, I do, Bethlen; for he just now brought
False witnesses to swear away your life:
Your life, and old Bathory's too.

BETHLEN.

Bathory's!
Where is my father? Answer, or——Ha! gone!
[Laska *during this time slinks off the Stage, using threatening gestures to* Glycine.

GLYCINE.

Oh, heed not *him!* I saw you pressing onward,
And did but feign alarm. Dear gallant youth,
It is *your* life they seek!

BETHLEN.

My life?

GLYCINE.

Alas!
Lady Sarolta even—

BETHLEN.

She does not know me!

GLYCINE.

Oh that she did! she could not then have spoken
With such stern countenance. But though she spurn me,
I will kneel, Bethlen—

BETHLEN.

Not for me, Glycine!
What have I done? or whom have I offended?

GLYCINE.

Rash words, 't is said, and treasonous, of the king.
[Bethlen *mutters to himself indignantly.*

GLYCINE (*aside*).

So looks the statue, in our hall, o' the god,
The shaft just flown that killed the serpent!

BETHLEN (*muttering aside*).
King!

GLYCINE.
Ah, often have I wished *you* were a king.
You would protect the helpless every where,
As you did us. And I, too, should not then
Grieve for you, Bethlen, as I do; nor have
The tears come in my eyes; nor dream bad dreams
That you were kill'd in the forest; and then Laska
Would have no right to rail at me, nor say
(Yes, the base man, he says) that I—I love you.

BETHLEN.
Pretty Glycine! wert thou not betrothed—
But in good truth I know not what I speak.
This luckless morning I have been so haunted
With my own fancies, starting up like omens,
That I feel like one, who waking from a dream
Both asks and answers wildly.—But Bathory?

GLYCINE.
Hist! 't is my lady's step! She must not see you!
[BETHLEN *retires.*

Enter from the Cottage SAROLTA *and* BATHORY.

SAROLTA.
Go, seek your son! I need not add, be speedy—
You here, Glycine? [*Exit* BATHORY.

GLYCINE.
Pardon, pardon, Madam!
If you but saw the old man's son, you would not,
You could not have him harm'd.

SAROLTA.
Be calm, Glycine!

GLYCINE.
No, I shall break my heart. [*Sobbing.*

SAROLTA (*taking her hand*).
Ha! is it so?
O strange and hidden power of sympathy,
That of like fates, though all unknown to each,
Dost make blind instincts, orphan's heart to orphan's
Drawing by dim disquiet!

GLYCINE.
Old Bathory—

SAROLTA.
Seeks his brave son. Come, wipe away thy tears.
Yes, in good truth, Glycine, this same Bethlen
Seems a most noble and deserving youth.

GLYCINE.
My lady does not mock me?

SAROLTA.
Where is Laska?
Has he not told thee?

GLYCINE.
Nothing. In his fear—
Anger, I mean—stole off—I am so flutter'd—
Left me abruptly—

SAROLTA.
His shame excuses him!
He is somewhat hardly task'd; and in discharging
His own tools, cons a lesson for himself.
Bathory and the youth henceforward live
Safe in my lord's protection.

GLYCINE.
The saints bless you!
Shame on my graceless heart! How dared I fear
Lady Sarolta could be cruel?

SAROLTA.
Come,
Be yourself, girl!

GLYCINE.
O, 't is so full *here!* [*At her heart.*
And now it can not harm him if I tell you,
That the old man's son—

SAROLTA.
Is *not* that old man's son!
A destiny, not unlike thine own, is his.
For all I know of *thee* is, that thou art
A soldier's orphan: left when rage intestine
Shook and engulf'd the pillars of Illyria.
This other fragment, thrown back by that same earth-
quake,
This, so mysteriously inscribed by nature,
Perchance may piece out and interpret thine.
Command thyself! Be secret! His true father——
Hear'st thou?

GLYCINE (*eagerly*).
O tell—

BETHLEN (*who had overheard the last few words, now rushes out*).
Yes, tell me, Shape from heaven!
Who is my father?

SAROLTA (*gazing with surprise*).
Thine? *Thy* father? Rise!

GLYCINE.
Alas! He hath alarm'd you, my dear lady!

SAROLTA.
His countenance, not his act!

GLYCINE.
Rise, Bethlen! Rise!

BETHLEN.
No; kneel thou too! and with thy orphan's tongue
Plead for me! I am rooted to the earth,
And have no power to rise! Give me a father!
There is a prayer in those uplifted eyes
That seeks high Heaven! But I will overtake it,
And bring it back, and make it plead for me
In thine own heart! Speak! speak! Restore to me
A name in the world!

SAROLTA.
By that blest Heaven I gazed at,
I know not who thou art. And if I knew,
Dared I—But rise!

BETHLEN.
Blest spirits of my parents,
Ye hover o'er me now! Ye shine upon me!
And like a flower that coils forth from a ruin,
I feel and seek the light, I cannot see!

SAROLTA.
Thou see'st yon dim spot on the mountain's ridge,
But what it is thou know'st not. Even such
Is all I know of thee—haply, brave youth,
Is all Fate makes it safe for thee to know!

BETHLEN.
Safe? safe? O let me then inherit danger,
And it shall be my birth-right!

SAROLTA (*aside*).
That look again!—
The wood which first incloses, and then skirts
The highest track that leads across the mountains—
Thou know'st it, Bethlen?

BETHLEN.
Lady, 't was my wont

To roam there in my childhood oft alone,
And mutter to myself the name of father.
For still Bathory (why, till now I guess'd not)
Would never hear it from my lips, but sighing
Gazed upward. Yet of late an idle terror——

GLYCINE.

Madam, that wood is haunted by the war-wolves,
Vampires, and monstrous——

SAROLTA (*with a smile*).

Moon-calves, credulous girl!
Haply some o'ergrown savage of the forest
Hath his lair there, and fear hath framed the rest.
[*Then speaking again to Bethlen.*
After that last great battle (O young man!
Thou wakest anew my life's sole anguish), that
Which fixed Lord Emerick on his throne, Bathory
Led by a cry, far inward from the track,
In the hollow of an old oak, as in a nest,
Did find thee, Bethlen, then a helpless babe:
The robe, that wrapt thee, was a widow's mantle.

BETHLEN.

An infant's weakness doth relax my frame.
O say—I fear to ask——

SAROLTA.

And I to tell thee.

BETHLEN.

Strike! O strike quickly! See, I do not shrink.
[*Striking his breast.*
I am stone, cold stone.

SAROLTA.

Hid in a brake hard by,
Scarce by both palms supported from the earth,
A wounded lady lay, whose life fast waning
Seem'd to survive itself in her fixt eyes,
That strain'd towards the babe. At length one arm
Painfully from her own weight disengaging,
She pointed first to Heaven, then from her bosom
Drew forth a golden casket. Thus entreated
Thy foster-father took thee in his arms,
And, kneeling, spake: If aught of this world's comfort
Can reach thy heart, receive a poor man's troth,
That at my life's risk I will save thy child!
Her countenance work'd, as one that seem'd preparing
A loud voice, but it died upon her lips
In a faint whisper, «Fly! Save him! Hide—hide all!»

BETHLEN.

And did he leave her? What! had I a mother?
And left her bleeding, dying? Bought I vile life
With the desertion of a dying mother?
Oh agony!

GLYCINE.

Alas! thou art bewilder'd,
And dost forget thou wert a helpless infant!

BETHLEN.

What else can I remember, but a mother
Mangled and left to perish?

SAROLTA.

Hush, Glycine!
It is the ground-swell of a teeming instinct:
Let it but lift itself to air and sunshine,
And it will find a mirror in the waters,
It now makes boil above it. Check him not!

BETHLEN.

O that I were diffused among the waters
That pierce into the secret depths of earth,
And find their way in darkness! Would that I
Could spread myself upon the homeless winds!
And I would seek her! for she is not dead!
She *can not* die! O pardon, gracious lady;
You were about to say, that he return'd—

SAROLTA.

Deep Love, the godlike in us, still believes
Its objects as immortal as itself!

BETHLEN.

And found her still—

SAROLTA.

Alas! he did return:
He left no spot unsearch'd in all the forest,
But she (I trust me by some friendly hand)
Had been borne off.

BETHLEN.

O whither?

GLYCINE.

Dearest Bethlen!
I would that you could weep like me! O do not
Gaze so upon the air!

SAROLTA (*continuing the story*).

While he was absent,
A friendly troop, 't is certain, scour'd the wood,
Hotly pursued indeed by Emerick.

BETHLEN.

Emerick.
Oh Hell!

GLYCINE (*to silence him*).

Bethlen!

BETHLEN.

Hist! I 'll curse him in a whisper!
This gracious lady must hear blessings only.
She hath not yet the glory round her head,
Nor those strong eagle wings, which made swift way
To that appointed place, which I must seek:
Or else *she* were my mother!

SAROLTA.

Noble youth!
From me fear nothing! Long time have I owed
Offerings of expiation for misdeeds
Long pass'd that weigh me down, though innocent!
Thy foster-father hid the secret from thee,
For he perceived thy thoughts as they expanded,
Proud, restless, and ill-sorting with thy state!
Vain was his care! Thou 'st made thyself suspected
E'en where Suspicion reigns, and asks no proof
But its own fears! Great Nature hath endow'd thee
With her best gifts! From me thou shalt receive
All honourable aidance! But haste hence!
Travel will ripen thee, and enterprise
Beseems thy years! Be thou henceforth *my* soldier!
And whatsoe'er betide thee, still believe
That in each noble deed, achieved or suffer'd,
Thou solvest best the riddle of thy birth!
And may the light that streams from thine own honour
Guide thee to that thou seekest!

GLYCINE.

Must he leave us?

BETHLEN.

And for such goodness can I return nothing,
But some hot tears that sting mine eyes? Some sighs
That if not breathed would swell my heart to stifling?
May Heaven and thine own virtues, high-born lady,
Be as a shield of fire, far, far aloof
To scare all evil from thee! Yet, if fate
Hath destined thee one doubtful hour of danger,
From the uttermost region of the earth, methinks,

Swift as a spirit invoked, I should be with thee!
And then, perchance, I might have power to unbosom
These thanks that struggle here. Eyes fair as thine
Have gazed on me with tears of love and anguish,
Which these eyes saw not, or beheld unconscious;
And tones of anxious fondness, passionate prayers,
Have been talk'd to me! But this tongue ne'er soothed
A mother's ear, lisping a mother's name!
O at how dear a price have I been loved,
And no love could return! One boon then, lady!
Where'er thou bid'st, I go thy faithful soldier,
But first must trace the spot, where she lay bleeding
Who gave me life. No more shall beast of ravine
Affront with baser spoil that sacred forest!
Or if avengers more than human haunt there,
Take they what shape they list, savage or heavenly,
They shall make answer to me, though my heart's blood
Should be the spell to bind them. Blood calls for blood!
[*Exit* BETHLEN.

SAROLTA.

Ah! it was this I fear'd. To ward off this
Did I withhold from him that old Bathory
Returning, hid beneath the self same oak,
Where the babe lay, the mantle, and some jewel
Bound on his infant arm.

GLYCINE.

Oh, let me fly
And stop him! Mangled limbs do there lie scatter'd
Till the lured eagle bears them to her nest.
And voices have been heard! And there the plant grows
That being eaten gives the inhuman wizard
Power to put on the fell hyæna's shape.

SAROLTA.

What idle tongue hath witch'd *thee*, Glycine?
I hoped that thou hadst learnt a nobler faith.

GLYCINE.

O chide me not, dear lady! question Laska,
Or the old man.

SAROLTA.

Forgive me, I spake harshly.
It is indeed a mighty sorcery
That doth enthral thy young heart, my poor girl:
And what hath Laska told thee?

GLYCINE.

Three days past
A courier from the king did cross that wood;
A wilful man, that arm'd himself on purpose:
And never hath been heard of from that time!
[*Sound of horns without.*

SAROLTA.

Hark! dost thou hear it?

GLYCINE.

'T is the sound of horns!
Our huntsmen are not out!

SAROLTA.

Lord Casimir
Would not come thus! [*Horns again.*

GLYCINE.

Still louder!

SAROLTA.

Haste we hence!
For I believe in part thy tale of terror!
But, trust me, 't is the inner man transform'd:
Beasts in the shape of men are worse than war-wolves.
[SAROLTA *and* GLYCINE *exeunt. Trumpets etc. louder.*

Enter EMERICK, LORD RUDOLPH, LASKA *and Huntsmen and Attendants.*

RUDOLPH.

A gallant chace, Sire.

EMERICK.

Aye, but this new quarry
That we last started seems worth all the rest.
[*Then to* LASKA.
And you—excuse me—what 's your name?

LASKA.

Whatever
Your Majesty may please.

EMERICK.

Nay, that 's too late, man.
Say, what thy mother and thy godfather
Were pleased to call thee?

LASKA.

Laska, my liege Sovereign.

EMERICK.

Well, my liege subject Laska! And you are
Lord Casimir's steward?

LASKA.

And your majesty's creature.

EMERICK.

Two gentle dames made off at our approach.
Which was your lady?

LASKA.

My liege lord, the taller.
The other, please your grace, is her poor handmaid,
Long since betrothed to me. But the maid 's froward—
Yet would your grace but speak—

EMERICK.

Hum, master steward!
I am honoured with this sudden confidence.
Lead on. [*To* LASKA, *then to* RUDOLPH.
Lord Rudolph, you 'll announce our coming.
Greet fair Sarolta from me, and entreat her
To be our gentle hostess. Mark, you add
How much we grieve, that business of the state
Hath forced us to delay her lord's return.

LORD RUDOLPH (*aside*).

Lewd, ingrate tyrant! Yes, I will announce thee.

EMERICK.

Now onward all. [*Exeunt attendants.*

EMERICK (*solus*).

A fair one, by my faith!
If her face rival but her gait and stature,
My good friend Casimir had *his* reasons too.
« *Her tender health, her vow of strict retirement,*
Made early in the convent—His word pledged—»
All fictions, all! fictions of jealousy.
Well! if the mountain move not to the prophet,
The prophet must to the mountain! In this Laska
There 's somewhat of the knave mix'd up with dolt.
Through the transparence of the fool, methought,
I saw (as I could lay my finger on it)
The crocodile's eye, that peer'd up from the bottom.
This knave may do us service. Hot ambition
Won me the husband. Now let vanity
And the resentment for a forced seclusion
Decoy the wife! Let him be deem'd the aggressor
Whose cunning and distrust began the game!
[*Exit.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.

A savage wood. At one side a cavern, overhung with ivy. ZAPOLYA *and* RAAB KIUPRILI *discovered: both, but especially the latter, in rude and savage garments.*

RAAB KIUPRILI.

Heard you then aught while I was slumbering?

ZAPOLYA.

Nothing.
Only your face became convulsed. We miserable!
Is heaven's last mercy fled? Is sleep grown treacherous?

RAAB KIUPRILI.

O for a sleep, for sleep itself to rest in!
I dreamt I had met with food beneath a tree,
And I was seeking you, when all at once
My feet became entangled in a net:
Still more entangled as in rage I tore it.
At length I freed myself, had sight of you,
But as I hasten'd eagerly, again
I found my frame encumber'd: a huge serpent
Twined round my chest, but tightest round my throat.

ZAPOLYA.

Alas! 't was lack of food: for hunger chokes!

RAAB KIUPRILI.

And now I saw you by a shrivell'd child
Strangely pursued. You did not fly, yet neither
Touch'd you the ground methought, but close above it
Did seem to shoot yourself along the air,
And as you pass'd me, turn'd your face and shriek'd.

ZAPOLYA.

I did in truth send forth a feeble shrick,
Scarce knowing why. Perhaps the mock'd sense craved
To *hear* the scream, which you but seem'd to utter.
For your whole face look'd like a mask of torture!
Yet a child's image doth indeed pursue me
Shrivell'd with toil and penury!

RAAB KIUPRILI.

Nay! what ails you?

ZAPOLYA.

A wonderous faintness there comes stealing o'er me.
Is it Death's lengthening shadow, who comes onward,
Life's setting sun behind him?

RAAB KIUPRILI.

Cheerly! The dusk
Will quickly shroud us. Ere the moon be up,
Trust me I'll bring thee food!

ZAPOLYA.

Hunger's tooth has
Gnawn itself blunt. O, I could queen it well
O'er my own sorrows as my rightful subjects.
But wherefore, O revered Kiuprili! wherefore
Did my importunate prayers, my hopes and fancies,
Force thee from thy secure though sad retreat?
Would that my tongue had then cloven to my mouth!
But Heaven is just! With tears I conquer'd thee,
And not a tear is left me to repent with!
Hadst thou not done already—hadst thou not
Suffer'd—oh, more than e'er man feign'd of friendship?

RAAB KIUPRILI.

Yet be thou comforted! What! hadst thou faith
When I turn'd back incredulous? 'T was thy light
That kindled mine. And shall it now go out,
And leave thy soul in darkness? Yet look up,
And think thou see'st thy sainted lord commission'd
And on his way to aid us! Whence those late dreams,
Which after such long interval of hopeless
And silent resignation, all at once
Night after night commanded thy return
Hither? and still presented in clear vision
This wood as in a scene? this very cavern?
Thou darest not doubt that Heaven's especial hand
Work'd in those signs. The hour of thy deliverance
Is on the stroke:—for Misery can not add
Grief to thy griefs, or Patience to thy sufferance!

ZAPOLYA.

Can not! Oh, what if thou were taken from me?
Nay, thou saidst well: for that and death were one.
Life's grief is at its height indeed; the hard
Necessity of this inhuman state
Has made our deeds inhuman as our vestments.
Housed in this wild wood, with wild usages,
Danger our guest, and famine at our portal—
Wolf-like to prowl in the shepherd's fold by night!
At once for food and safety to affrighten
The traveller from his road—

[GLYCINE *is heard singing without.*

RAAB KIUPRILI.

Hark! heard you not
A distant chaunt!

SONG, BY GLYCINE.

A sunny shaft did I behold,
From sky to earth it slanted:
And poised therein a bird so bold—
Sweet bird, thou wert enchanted!

He sunk, he rose, he twinkled, he troll'd
Within that shaft of sunny mist;
His eyes of fire, his beak of gold,
All else of amethyst!

And thus he sang: «Adieu! adieu!
Love's dreams prove seldom true.
The blossoms, they make no delay:
The sparkling dew-drops will not stay.
Sweet month of May,
We must away;
Far, far away!
To-day! to-day!»

ZAPOLYA.

Sure 't is some blest spirit!
For since thou slewest the usurper's emissary
That plunged upon us, a more than mortal fear
Is as a wall, that wards off the beleaguerer
And starves the poor besieged. [*Song again.*

RAAB KIUPRILI.

It is a maiden's voice! quick to the cave!

ZAPOLYA.

Hark! her voice faulters! [*Exit* ZAPOLYA.

RAAB KIUPRILI.

She must not enter
The cavern, else I will remain unseen!

[KIUPRILI *retires to one side of the stage.* GLYCINE *enters singing.*

GLYCINE (*fearfully.*)

A savage place! saints shield me! Bethlen! Bethlen!
Not here?—There 's no one here! I'll sing again.

[*Sings again.*

If I do not hear my own voice, I shall fancy
Voices in all chance sounds! [*Starts.*
'T was some dry branch
Dropt of itself! Oh, he went forth so rashly,
Took no food with him—only his arms and boar-spear!
What if I leave these cakes, this cruse of wine,
Here by this cave, and seek him with the rest?

RAAB KIUPRILI (*unseen*).

Leave them and flee!

GLYCINE (*shrieks, then recovering*).

Where are you?

RAAB KIUPRILI (*still unseen*).

Leave them!

GLYCINE.

'T is Glycine!
Speak to me, Bethlen! speak in your own voice!
All silent!—If this were the war-wolf's den!
'T was not his voice!—

[GLYCINE *leaves the provisions and exit fearfully.* KIUPRILI *comes forward, seizes them and carries them into the cavern.* GLYCINE *returns, having recovered herself.*

GLYCINE.

Shame! Nothing hurt me!
If some fierce beast have gored him, he must needs
Speak with a strange voice. Wounds cause thirst and hoarseness!
Speak, Bethlen! or but moan. St—St——No—Bethlen!
If I turn back and he should be found dead here,
[*She creeps nearer and nearer to the cavern.*
I should go mad!—Again!—'T was my own heart!
Hush, coward heart! better beat loud with fear,
Than break with shame and anguish!
[*As she approaches to enter the cavern,* KIUPRILI *stops her.* GLYCINE *shrieks.*
Saints protect me!

RAAB KIUPRILI.

Swear then by all thy hopes, by all thy fears—

GLYCINE.

Save me!

RAAB KIUPRILI.

Swear secrecy and silence!

GLYCINE.

I swear!

RAAB KIUPRILI.

Tell what thou art, and what thou seekest?

GLYCINE.

Only
A harmless orphan youth, to bring him food—

RAAB KIUPRILI.

Wherefore in this wood?

GLYCINE.

Alas! it was his purpose—

RAAB KIUPRILI.

With what intention came he? Wouldst thou save him,
Hide nothing!

GLYCINE.

Save him! O forgive his rashness!
He is good, and did not know that thou wert human!

RAAB KIUPRILI (*repeats the word*).

Human?
[*Then sternly.*
With what design?

GLYCINE.

To kill thee, or
If that thou wert a spirit, to compel thee
By prayers, and with the shedding of his blood,
To make disclosure of his parentage.
But most of all—

ZAPOLYA (*rushing out from the cavern*).

Heaven's blessing on thee! Speak!

GLYCINE.

Whether his Mother live, or perish'd here!

ZAPOLYA.

Angel of Mercy, I was perishing
And thou didst bring me food: and now thou bring'st
The sweet, sweet food of hope and consolation
To a mother's famish'd heart! His name, sweet maiden!

GLYCINE.

E'en till this morning we were wont to name him
Bethlen Bathory!

ZAPOLYA.

Even till this morning?
This morning? when my weak faith fail'd me wholly!
Pardon, O thou that portion'st out our sufferance,
And fill'st again the widow's empty cruse!
Say on!

GLYCINE.

The false ones charged the valiant youth
With treasonous words of Emerick—

ZAPOLYA.

Ha! my son!

GLYCINE.

And of Lord Casimir—

RAAB KIUPRILI (*aside*).

O agony! *my* son!

GLYCINE.

But my dear lady—

ZAPOLYA *and* RAAB KIUPRILI.

Who?

GLYCINE.

Lady Sarolta
Frown'd and discharged these bad men.

RAAB KIUPRILI (*turning off and to himself*).

Righteous heaven
Sent me a daughter once, and I repined
That it was not a son. A son was given me.
My daughter died, and I scarce shed a tear:
And lo! that son became my curse and infamy.

ZAPOLYA (*embraces* GLYCINE).

Sweet innocent! and you came here to seek him,
And bring him food. Alas! thou fear'st?

GLYCINE.

Not much!
My own dear lady, when I was a child
Embraced me oft, but her heart never beat so.
For I too am an orphan, motherless!

RAAB KIUPRILI (*to* ZAPOLYA).

O yet beware, lest hope's brief flash but deepen
The after gloom, and make the darkness stormy!
In that last conflict, following our escape,
The usurper's cruelty had clogg'd our flight
With many a babe, and many a childing mother.
This maid herself is one of numberless
Planks from the same vast wreck.
[*Then to* GLYCINE *again.*
Well! Casimir's wife—

GLYCINE.

She is always gracious, and so praised the old man
That his heart o'erflowed, and made discovery
That in this wood—

ZAPOLYA (*in agitation*).
O speak!
GLYCINE.
A wounded lady—
[ZAPOLYA *faints—they both support her.*
GLYCINE.
s this his mother?
RAAB KIUPRILI.
She would fain believe it,
Veak though the proofs be. Hope draws towards itself
hc flame with which it kindles.
[*Horn heard without.*
To the cavern!
Quick! quick!
GLYCINE.
Perchance some huntsmen of the king's.
RAAB KIUPRILI.
merick?
GLYCINE.
He came this morning—
[*They retire to the cavern, bearing* ZAPOLYA. *Then enter* BETHLEN *armed with a boar-spear.*
BETHLEN.
I had a glimpse
Of some fierce shape; and but that Fancy often
s Nature's intermeddler, and cries halves
Vith the outward sight, I should believe I saw it
ear off some human prey. O my preserver!
athory! Father! Yes, thou deservest that name!
hou didst not mock me! These are blessed findings!
he secret cypher of my destiny
[*Looking at his signet.*
tands here inscribed: it is the seal of fate!
la!—(*Observing the cave*). Had ever monster fitting
lair, 't is yonder!
hou yawning Den, I well remember thee!
line eyes deceived me not. Heaven leads me on!
Vow for a blast, loud as a king's defiance,
o rouse the monster couchant o'er his ravine!
[*Blows the horn—then a pause.*
nother blast! and with another swell
o you, ye charmed watchers of this wood!
f haply I have come, the rightful heir
Of vengeance: if in me survive the spirits
Of those, whose guiltless blood flowed streaming here!
[*Blows again louder.*
Still silent? Is the monster gorged? Heaven shield me!
Thou, faithful spear! be both my torch and guide.
[*As* BETHLEN *is about to enter,* KIUPRILI *speaks from the cavern unseen.*
RAAB KIUPRILI.
Withdraw thy foot! Retract thine idle spear,
And wait obedient!
BETHLEN (*in amazement*).
Ha! What art thou? speak!
RAAB KIUPRILI (*still unseen*).
Avengers!
BETHLEN.
By a dying mother's pangs,
E'en such am I. Receive me!
RAAB KIUPRILI (*still unseen*).
Wait! Beware!
At thy first step, thou treadest upon the light
Thenceforth must darkling flow, and sink in darkness!
BETHLEN.
Ha! see my boar-spear trembles like a reed!—
Oh, fool! mine eyes are duped by my own shuddering.—
Those piled thoughts, built up in solitude,
Year following year, that press'd upon my heart
As on the altar of some unknown God,
Then, as if touch'd by fire from heaven descending,
Blazed up within me at a father's name—
Do they desert me now!—at my last trial?
Voice of command! and thou, O hidden Light!
I have obey'd! Declare ye by what name
I dare invoke you! Tell what sacrifice
Will make you gracious.
RAAB KIUPRILI (*still unseen*).
Patience! Truth! Obedience!
Be thy whole soul transparent! so the Light
Thou seekest may enshrine itself within thee!
Thy name?
BETHLEN.
Ask rather the poor roaming savage,
Whose infancy no holy rite had blest.
To him, perchance rude spoil or ghastly trophy,
In chase or battle won, have given a name.
I have none—but like a dog have answer'd
To the chance sound which he that fed me call'd me.
RAAB KIUPRILI (*still unseen*).
Thy birth-place?
BETHLEN.
Deluding spirits, Do ye mock me?
Question the Night! Bid Darkness tell its birth-place?
Yet hear! Within yon old oak's hollow trunk,
Where the bats cling, have I survey'd my cradle!
The mother-falcon hath her nest above it,
And in it the wolf litters!——I invoke you,
Tell me, ye secret ones! if ye beheld me
As I stood there, like one who having delved
For hidden gold hath found a talisman,
O tell! what rights, what offices of duty
This signet doth command? What rebel spirits
Owe homage to its Lord?
RAAB KIUPRILI (*still unseen*).
More, guiltier, mightier,
Than thou mayest summon! Wait the destined hour!
BETHLEN.
O yet again, and with more clamorous prayer,
I importune ye! Mock me no more with shadows!
This sable mantle—tell, dread voice! did this
Enwrap one fatherless?
ZAPOLYA (*unseen*).
One fatherless!
BETHLEN (*starting*).
A sweeter voice!—A voice of love and pity!
Was it the soften'd echo of mine own?
Sad echo! but the hope it kill'd was sickly,
And ere it died it had been mourn'd as dead!
One other hope yet lives within my soul:
Quick let me ask!—while yet this stifling fear,
This stop of the heart, leaves utterance!—Are—are these
The sole remains of her that gave me life?
Have I a mother?
[ZAPOLYA *rushes out to embrace him.* BETHLEN *starts.*
Ha!
ZAPOLYA (*embracing him*).
My son! my son!
A wretched—Oh no, no! a blest—a happy mother!
[*They embrace.* KIUPRILI *and* GLYCINE *come forward, and the curtain drops.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.

A stately Room in LORD CASIMIR'S *Castle.*

Enter EMERICK *and* LASKA.

EMERICK.

I do perceive thou hast a tender conscience,
Laska, in all things that concern thine own
Interest or safety.

LASKA.

In this sovereign presence
I can fear nothing, but your dread displeasure.

EMERICK.

Perchance, thou think'st it strange, that *I* of all men
Should covet thus the love of fair Soralta,
Dishonouring Casimir?

LASKA.

Far be it from me!
Your Majesty's love and choice bring honour with them.

EMERICK.

Perchance, thou hast heard, that Casimir is my friend,
Fought for me, yea, for my sake, set at nought
A parent's blessing; braved a father's curse?

LASKA (*aside*).

Would I but knew now, what his Majesty meant!
Oh yes, Sire! 't is our common talk, how Lord
Kiuprili, my Lord's father—

EMERICK.

'T is your talk,
Is it, good statesman Laska?

LASKA.

No, not mine,
Not mine, an please your Majesty! There are
Some insolent malcontents indeed that talk thus—
Nay worse, mere treason. As Bathory's son,
The fool that ran into the monster's jaws.

EMERICK.

Well, 't is a loyal monster if he rids us
Of traitors! But art sure the youth 's devoured?

LASKA.

Not a limb left, an please your Majesty!
And that unhappy girl—

EMERICK.

Thou followed'st her
Into the wood? [LASKA *bows assent.*
Henceforth then I'll believe
That jealousy can make a hare a lion.

LASKA.

Scarce had I got the first glimpse of her veil
When, with a horrid roar that made the leaves
Of the wood shake—

EMERICK.

Made thee shake like a leaf!

LASKA.

The war-wolf leapt; at the first plunge he seized her;
Forward I rush'd!

EMERICK.

Most marvellous!

LASKA.

Hurl'd my javelin;
Which from his dragon-scales recoiling—

EMERICK.

Enough!
And take, friend, this advice. When next thou tongucst it,
Hold constant to thy exploit with this monster,
And leave untouched your *common talk* aforesaid,
What your Lord did, or should have done.

LASKA.

My talk?
The saints forbid! I always said, for my part,
« *Was not the king Lord Casimir's dearest friend?*
Was not that friend a king? Whate'er he did
'T was all from pure love to his Majesty.»

EMERICK.

And this then was *thy* talk? While knave and coward,
Both strong within thee, wrestle for the uppermost,
In slips the fool and takes the place of both,
Babbler! Lord Casimir did, as thou and all men.
He loved himself, loved honours, wealth, dominion.
All these were set upon a father's head:
Good truth! a most unlucky accident!
For he but wish'd to hit the prize; not graze
The head that bore it: so with steady eye
Off flew the parricidal arrow.—Even
As Casimir loved Emerick, Emerick
Loves Casimir, intends *him* no dishonour.
He wink'd not then, for love of *me* forsooth!
For love of me now let him wink! Or if
The dame prove half as wise as she is fair,
He may still pass his hand, and find all smooth.
[*Passing his hand across his brow.*

LASKA.

Your Majesty's reasoning has convinced me.

EMERICK (*with a slight start, as one who had been talking aloud to himself: then with scorn*).

Thee!
'T is well! and more than meant. For by my faith
I had half forgotten thee.—Thou hast the key?
[LASKA *bows.*
And in your lady's chamber there 's full space?

LASKA.

Between the wall and arras to conceal you.

EMERICK.

Here! This purse is but an earnest of thy fortune,
If thou provest faithful. But if thou betrayest me,
Hark you!—the wolf that shall drag *thee* to his den
Shall be no fiction.

[*Exit* EMERICK. LASKA *manet with a key in one hand, and a purse in the other.*

LASKA.

Well then! Here I stand,
Like Hercules, on either side a goddess.
Call this [*Looking at the purse.*
Preferment; this (*Holding up the key*), Fidelity!
And first my golden goddess: what bids she?
Only:—« *This way your Majesty! hush. The household*
Are all safe lodged.»—Then, put Fidelity
Within her proper wards, just turn her round—
So—the door opens—and for all the rest,
'T is the king's deed, not Laska's. Do but this
And—«*I 'm the mere earnest of your future fortunes.*»
But what says the other?—Whisper on! I hear you!
[*Putting the key to his ear.*
All very true!—but, good Fidelity!
If I refuse king Emerick, will you promise,
And swear, now, to unlock the dungeon-door,
And save me from the hangman? Aye! you 're silent!
What not a word in answer? A clear nonsuit!
Now for one look to see that all are lodged

At the due distance—then—yonder lies the road
For Laska and his royal friend king Emerick!
[*Exit* LASKA. *Then enter* BATHORY *and* BETHLEN.

BETHLEN.

He look'd as if he were some God disguised
In an old warrior's venerable shape,
To guard and guide my mother. Is there not
Chapel or oratory in this mansion?

OLD BATHORY.

Even so.

BETHLEN.

From that place then am I to take
A helm and breast-plate, both inlaid with gold,
And the good sword that once was Raab Kiuprili's.

OLD BATHORY.

Those very arms this day Sarolta show'd me—
With wistful look. I'm lost in wild conjectures!

BETHLEN.

O tempt me not, e'en with a wandering guess,
To break the first command a mother's will
Imposed, a mother's voice made known to me!
« *Ask not, my son,*» said she, « *our names or thine.*
The shadow of the eclipse is passing off
The full orb of thy destiny! Already
The victor Crescent glitters forth, and sheds
O'er the yet lingering haze a phantom light.
Thou canst not hasten it! Leave then to Heaven
The work of Heaven: and with a silent spirit
Sympathize with the powers that work in silence!»
Thus spake she, and she look'd as she were then
Fresh from some heavenly vision!
[*Re-enter* LASKA, *not perceiving them.*

LASKA.

All asleep!
[*Then observing* BETHLEN, *stands in idiot-affright.*
I must speak to it first—Put—put the question!
I'll confess all! [*Stammering with fear.*

OLD BATHORY.

Laska! what ails thee, man?

LASKA (*pointing to* BETHLEN).

There!

OLD BATHORY.

I see nothing! where?

LASKA.

He does not see it!
Bethlen, torment me not!

BETHLEN.

Soft! Rouse him gently!
He hath outwatch'd his hour, and half asleep,
With eyes half open, mingles sight with dreams.

OLD BATHORY.

Ho! Laska! Don't you know us! 't is Bathory
And Bethlen!

LASKA (*recovering himself*).

Good now! Ha! ha! An excellent trick.
Afraid! Nay no offence! But I must laugh.
But are you sure now, that 't is you, yourself.

BETHLEN (*holding up his hand as if to strike him*).

Would'st be convinced?

LASKA.

No nearer, pray! consider!
If it *should* prove his ghost, the touch would freeze me
To a tomb-stone. No nearer!

BETHLEN.

The fool is drunk!

LASKA (*still more recovering*).

Well now! I love a brave man to my heart.
I myself braved the monster, and would fain
Have saved the false one from the fate she tempted.

OLD BATHORY.

You, Laska?

BETHLEN (*to* BATHORY).

Mark! Heaven grant it may be so!
Glycine?

LASKA.

She! I traced her by the voice.
You 'll scarce believe me, when I say I heard
The close of a song: the poor wretch had been singing:
As if she wish'd to compliment the war-wolf
At once with music and a meal!

BETHLEN (*to* BATHORY).

Mark that!

LASKA.

At the next moment I beheld her running,
Wringing her hands with, *Bethlen! O poor Bethlen!*
I almost fear, the sudden noise I made,
Rushing impetuous through the brake, alarm'd her.
She stopt, then mad with fear, turn'd round and ran
Into the monster's gripe. One piteous scream
I heard. There was no second—I—

BETHLEN.

Stop there!
We 'll spare your modesty! Who dares not honour
Laska's brave tongue, and high heroic fancy?

LASKA.

You too, Sir Knight, have come back safe and sound!
You play'd the hero at a cautious distance!
Or was it that you sent the poor girl forward
To stay the monster's stomach? Dainties quickly
Pall on the taste and cloy the appetite!

OLD BATHORY.

Laska, beware! Forget not what thou art!
Shouldst thou but dream thou 'rt valiant, cross thyself!
And ache all over at the dangerous fancy!

LASKA.

What then! you swell upon my lady's favour,
High Lords and perilous of one day's growth!
But other judges now sit on the bench!
And haply, Laska hath found audience there,
Where to defend the treason of a son
Might end in lifting up both Son and Father
Still higher; to a height from which indeed
You both *may* drop, but, spite of fate and fortune,
Will be secured from falling to the ground.
'T is possible too, young man! that royal Emerick,
At Laska's rightful suit, may make inquiry
By whom seduced, the maid so strangely missing—

BETHLEN.

Soft! my good Laska! might it not suffice,
If to yourself, being Lord Casimir's steward,
I should make record of Glycine's fate?

LASKA.

'T is well! it shall content me! though your fear
Has all the credit of these lower'd tones.
[*Then very pompously.*
First we demand the manner of her death?

BETHLEN.

Nay! that 's superfluous! Have you not just told us,
That you yourself, led by impetuous valour,
Witness'd the whole? My tale 's of later date.

After the fate, from which your valour strove
In vain to rescue the rash maid, I saw her!

LASKA.

Glycine?

BETHLEN.

Nay! Dare I accuse wise Laska,
Whose words find access to a monarch's ear,
Of a base, braggart lie? It must have been
Her spirit that appear'd to me. But haply
I come too late? It has itself deliver'd
Its own commission to you?

OLD BATHORY.

'T is most likely!
And the ghost doubtless vanish'd, when we enter'd
And found *brave* Laska staring wide—at nothing!

LASKA.

'T is well! You 've ready wits! I shall report them,
With all due honour, to his Majesty!
Treasure them up, I pray! A certain person,
Whom the king flatters with his confidence,
Tells you, his royal friend asks startling questions!
'T is but a hint! And now what says the ghost?

BETHLEN.

Listen! for thus it spake: « *Say thou to Laska,*
Glycine, knowing all thy thoughts engross'd
In thy new office of king's fool and knave,
Foreseeing thou 'lt forget with thine own hand
To make due penance for the wrongs thou 'st caused her,
For thy soul's safety, doth consent to take it
From Bethlen's cudgel»—thus. [*Beats him off.*
Off! scoundrel! off!
[LASKA *runs away.*

OLD BATHORY.

The sudden swelling of this shallow dastard
Tells of a recent storm: the first disruption
Of the black cloud that hangs and threatens o'er us.

BETHLEN.

E'en this reproves my loitering. Say where lies
The oratory?

OLD BATHORY.

Ascend yon flight of stairs!
Midway the corridor a silver lamp
Hangs o'er the entrance of Sarolta's chamber,
And facing it, the low arch'd oratory!
Me thou 'lt find watching at the outward gate:
For a petard might burst the bars, unheard
By the drenched porter, and Sarolta hourly
Expects Lord Casimir, spite of Emerick's message!

BETHLEN.

There I will meet you! And till then good night!
Dear good old man, good night!

OLD BATHORY.

O yet one moment!
What I repell'd, when it did seem my own,
I cling to, now 't is parting—call me father!
It can not now mislead thee. O my son,
Ere yet our tongues have learnt another name,
Bethlen!—say—Father to me!

BETHLEN.

Now, and for ever
My father! other sire than thou, on earth
I never had, a dearer could not have!
From the base earth you raised me to your arms,
And I would leap from off a throne, and kneeling,
Ask Heaven's blessing from thy lips. My father!

BATHORY.

Go! Go!
[BETHLEN *breaks off and exit.* BATHORY *looks affectionately after him.*
May every star now shining over us,
Be as an angel's eye, to watch and guard him!
[*Exit* BATHORY.

SCENE *changes to a splendid Bed-chamber, hung with tapestry.* SAROLTA *in an elegant Night Dress, and an Attendant.*

ATTENDANT.

We all did love her, madam!

SAROLTA.

She deserved it!
Luckless Glycine! rash, unhappy girl!
'T was the first time she e'er deceived me.

ATTENDANT.

She was in love, and had she not died thus,
With grief for Bethlen's loss, and fear of Laska,
She would have pined herself to death at home.

SAROLTA.

Has the youth's father come back from his search?

ATTENDANT.

He never will, I fear me, O dear lady!
That Laska did so triumph o'er the old man—
It was quite cruel—« *You 'll be sure,*» said he,
« *To meet with* PART *at least of your son Bethlen,*
Or the war-wolf must have a quick digestion!
Go! Search the wood by all means! Go! I pray you!»

SAROLTA.

Inhuman wretch!

ATTENDANT.

And old Bathory answer'd
With a sad smile, « *It is a witch's prayer,*
And may Heaven read it backwards.» Though she was rash,
'T was a small fault for such a punishment!

SAROLTA.

Nay! 't was my grief, and not my anger spoke,
Small fault indeed! but leave me, my good girl!
I feel a weight that only prayer can lighten.
[*Exit Attendant.*
O *they* were innocent, and yet have perished
In their May of life; and Vice grows old in triumph.
Is it Mercy's hand, that for the bad man holds
Life's closing gate?——
Still passing thence petitionary Hours
To woo the obdurate spirit to repentance?
Or would this chillness tell me, that there is
Guilt too enormous to be duly punish'd,
Save by increase of guilt? The Powers of Evil
Are jealous claimants. Guilt too hath its ordeal,
And Hell its own probation!—Merciful Heaven,
Rather than this, pour down upon thy suppliant
Disease, and agony, and comfortless want!
O send us forth to wander on, unsheltered!
Make our food bitter with despised tears!
Let viperous scorn hiss at us as we pass!
Yea, let us sink down at our enemy's gate,
And beg forgiveness and a morsel of bread!
With all the heaviest worldly visitations.
Let the dire father's curse that hovers o'er us
Work out its dread fulfilment, and the spirit
Of wrong'd Kiuprili be appeased. But only,
Only, O merciful in vengeance! let not

That plague turn inward on my Casimir's *soul!*
Scare thence the fiend Ambition, and restore him
To his own heart! O save him! Save my husband!
[*During the latter part of this speech Emerick comes forward from his hiding-place.* SAROLTA *seeing him, without recognizing him.*
In such a shape a father's curse should come.

EMERICK (*advancing*).

Fear not!

SAROLTA.

Who art thou? Robber! Traitor?

EMERICK.

Friend!
Who in good hour hath startled these dark fancies,
Rapacious traitors, that would fain depose
Joy, love, and beauty, from their natural thrones:
Those lips, those angel eyes, that regal forehead.

SAROLTA.

Strengthen me, Heaven! I must not seem afraid!
[*Aside.*
The king to night then deigns to play the masker.
What seeks your Majesty?

EMERICK.

Sarolta's love;
And Emerick's power lies prostrate at her feet.

SAROLTA.

Heaven guard the sovereign's power from such debasement!
Far rather, Sire, let it descend in vengeance
On the base ingrate, on the faithless slave
Who dared unbar the doors of these retirements!
For whom? Has Casimir deserved this insult?
O my misgiving heart! If—if—from Heaven
Yet not from you, Lord Emerick!

EMERICK.

Chiefly from me.
Has he not like an ingrate robb'd my court
Of Beauty's star, and kept my heart in darkness!
First then on him I will administer justice—
If not in mercy, yet in love and rapture. [*Seizes her.*

SAROLTA.

Help! Treason! Help!

EMERICK.

Call louder! Scream again:
Here's none can hear you!

SAROLTA.

Hear me, hear me, Heaven!

EMERICK.

Nay, why this rage? Who best deserves you? Casimir,
Emerick's bought implement, the jealous slave
That mews you up with bolts and bars? or Emerick
Who proffers you a throne? Nay, mine you shall be.
Hence with this fond resistance! Yield; then live
This month a widow, and the next a queen!

SAROLTA.

Yet, yet for one brief moment [*Struggling.*
Unhand me, I conjure you.
[*She throws him off, and rushes towards a toilet.* EMERICK *follows, and as she takes a dagger, he grasps it in her hand.*

EMERICK.

Ha! ha! a dagger;
A seemly ornament for a lady's casket!
'T is held, devotion is akin to love,
But yours is tragic! Love in war! It charms me,
And makes your beauty worth a king's embraces!
(*During this Speech* BETHLEN *enters armed*).

BETHLEN.

Ruffian forbear! Turn, turn and front my sword!

EMERICK.

Pish! who is this!

SAROLTA.

O sleepless eye of Heaven!
A blest, a blessed spirit! Whence camest thou?
May I still call thee Bethlen?

BETHLEN.

Ever, lady,
Your faithful soldier!

EMERICK.

Insolent slave! Depart!
Know'st thou not *me?*

BETHLEN.

I know thou art a villain
And coward! That, thy devilish purpose marks thee!
What else, this lady must instruct my sword!

SAROLTA.

Monster, retire! O touch him not, thou blest one!
This is the hour, that fiends and damned spirits
Do walk the earth, and take what form they list!
Yon devil hath assumed a king's!

BETHLEN.

Usurp'd it!

EMERICK.

The king will play the devil with thee indeed!
But that I mean to hear thee howl on the rack,
I would debase this sword, and lay thee prostrate,
At this thy paramour's feet; then drag her forth
Stain'd with adulterous blood, and [*Then to* SAROLTA.
—Mark you, traitress!
Strumpeted first, then turn'd adrift to beggary!
Thou prayed'st for 't too.

SAROLTA.

Thou art so fiendish wicked,
That in thy blasphemies I scarce hear thy threats!

BETHLEN.

Lady, be calm! fear not this king of the buskin!
A king? Oh laughter! A king Bajazet!
That from some vagrant actor's tyring-room,
Hath stolen at once his speech and crown!

EMERICK.

Ah! treason!
Thou hast been lesson'd and trick'd up for this!
As surely as the wax on thy death-warrant
Shall take the impression of this royal signet,
So plain thy face hath ta'en the mask of rebel!
[EMERICK *points his hand haughtily towards* BETHLEN, *who catching a sight of the signet, seizes his hand and eagerly observes the signet, then flings the hand back with indignant joy.*

BETHLEN.

It must be so! 'T is e'en the counterpart!
But with a foul usurping cipher on it!
The light hath flash'd from Heaven, and I must follow it!
O curst usurper! O thou brother-murderer!
That madest a star-bright queen a fugitive widow!
Who fillest the land with curses, being thyself
All curses in one tyrant! see and tremble!
This is Kiuprili's sword that now hangs o'er thee!
Kiuprili's blasting curse, that from its point

Shoots lightnings at thee. Hark! in Andreas' name,
Heir of his vengeance, hell-hound! I defy thee.

[*They fight, and just as* EMERICK *is disarmed, in rush* CASIMIR, OLD BATHORY, *and attendants.* CASIMIR *runs in between the combatants, and parts them; in the struggle* BETHLEN'S *sword is thrown down.*

CASIMIR.

The king disarm'd too by a stranger! Speak!
What may this mean?

EMERICK.

Deceived, dishonour'd lord!
Ask thou yon fair adultress! She will tell thee
A tale, which wouldst thou be both dupe and traitor,
Thou wilt believe against thy friend and sovereign!
Thou art present *now*, and a friend's duty ceases:
To thine own justice leave I thine own wrongs.
Of *half* thy vengeance, I perforce must rob thee,
For *that* the sovereign claims. To thy allegiance
I now commit this traitor and assassin.

[*Then to the Attendants.*

Hence with him to the dungeon! and to-morrow,
Ere the sun rises,—hark! your heads or his!

BETHLEN.

Can Hell work miracles to mock Heaven's justice?

EMERICK.

Who speaks to him dies! The traitor that has menaced
His king, must not pollute the breathing air,
Even with a word!

CASIMIR (*to* BATHORY).

Hence with him to the dungeon!

[*Exit* BETHLEN, *hurried off by* BATHORY *and Attendants.*

EMERICK.

We hunt to-morrow in your upland forest:
Thou (*to* CASIMIR) wilt attend us: and wilt then explain
This sudden and most fortunate arrival.

[*Exit* EMERICK; *Manent* CASIMIR *and* SAROLTA.

SAROLTA.

My lord! my husband! look whose sword lies yonder!

[*Pointing to the sword which* BETHLEN *had been disarmed of by the Attendants.*

It is Kiuprili's; Casimir, 't is thy father's!
And wielded by a stripling's arm, it baffled,
Yea, fell like Heaven's own lightnings on that Tarquin.

CASIMIR.

Hush! hush! [*In an under voice.*
I had detected ere I left the city
The tyrant's curst intent. Lewd, damn'd ingrate!
For him did I bring down a father's curse!
Swift swift must be our means! To-morrow's sun
Sets on his fate or mine! O blest Sarolta!

[*Embracing her.*

No other prayer, late penitent, dare I offer,
But that thy spotless virtues may prevail
O'er Casimir's crimes and dread Kiuprili's curse!

[*Exeunt consulting.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

A Glade in a Wood.

Enter CASIMIR *looking anxiously around.*

CASIMIR.

This needs must be the spot! O, here he comes!

Enter LORD RUDOLPH.

Well met Lord Rudolph!——
Your whisper was not lost upon my ear,
And I dare trust—

LORD RUDOLPH.

Enough! the time is precious!
You left Temeswar late on yester-eve?
And sojourn'd there some hours?

CASIMIR.

I did so!

LORD RUDOLPH.

Heard you
Aught of a hunt preparing?

CASIMIR.

Yes; and met
The assembled huntsmen!

LORD RUDOLPH.

Was there no word given?

CASIMIR.

The word for me was this;—*The royal Leopard Chases thy milk-white dedicated Hind.*

LORD RUDOLPH.

Your answer?

CASIMIR.

As the word proves false or true
Will Casimir cross the hunt, or join the huntsmen!

LORD RUDOLPH.

The event redeem'd their pledge?

CASIMIR.

It did, and therefore
Have I sent back both pledge and invitation.
The spotless Hind hath fled to them for shelter,
And bears with her my seal of fellowship!

[*They take hands, etc.*

LORD RUDOLPH.

But Emerick! how when you reported to him
Sarolta's disappearance, and the flight
Of Bethlen with his guards?

CASIMIR.

O he received it
As evidence of their mutual guilt: in fine,
With cozening warmth condoled with, and dismiss'd me.

LORD RUDOLPH.

I enter'd as the door was closing on you:
His eye was fix'd, yet seem'd to follow you:
With such a look of hate, and scorn and triumph,
As if he had you in the toils already,
And were then chusing where to stab you first.
But hush! draw back!

CASIMIR.

This nook is at the farthest
From any beaten track.

LORD RUDOLPH.

There! mark them!

[*Points to where* LASKA *and* PESTALUTZ *cross the Stage.*

CASIMIR.

Laska!

LORD RUDOLPH.

One of the two I recognized this morning;
His name is Pestalutz: a trusty ruffian,
Whose face is prologue still to some dark murder.
Beware no stratagem, no trick of message,
Dispart you from your servants.

CASIMIR (*aside*).

I deserve it.

The comrade of that ruffian is my servant:
The one I trusted most and most preferr'd.
But we must part. What makes the king so late?
It was his wont to be an early stirrer.

LORD RUDOLPH.

And his main policy
To enthral the sluggard nature in ourselves
Is, in good truth, the better half of the secret
To enthral the world: for the will governs all.
See the sky lowers! the cross-winds waywardly
Chase the fantastic masses of the clouds
With a wild mockery of the coming hunt!

CASIMIR.

Mark yonder mass! I make it wear the shape
Of a huge ram that butts with head depress'd.

LORD RUDOLPH (*smiling*).

Belike, some stray sheep of the oozy flock,
Which, if bards lie not, the Sea-shepherds tend,
Glaucus or Proteus. But *my* fancy shapes it
A monster couchant on a rocky shelf.

CASIMIR.

Mark too the edges of the lurid mass—
Restless, as if some idly-vexing Sprite,
On swift wing coasting by, with tetchy hand
Pluck'd at the ringlets of the vaporous Fleece.
These are sure signs of conflict nigh at hand,
And elemental war!

[*A single Trumpet heard at a distance.*

LORD RUDOLPH.

That single blast
Announces that the tyrant's pawing courser
Neighs at the gate. [*A volley of Trumpets.*
Hark! now the king comes forth!
For ever 'midst this crash of horns and clarions
He mounts his steed, which proudly rears an-end
While he looks round at ease, and scans the crowd,
Vain of his stately form and horsemanship!
I must away! my absence may be noticed.

CASIMIR.

Oft as thou canst, essay to lead the hunt
Hard by the forest-skirts; and ere high noon
Expect our sworn confederates from Temeswar.
I trust, ere yet this clouded sun slopes westward,
That Emerick's death, or Casimir's, will appease
The manes of Zapolya and Kiuprili!

[*Exit* RUDOLPH *and manet* CASIMIR.

The traitor, Laska!——
And yet Sarolta, simple, inexpericnced,
Could see him as he was, and often warn'd me.
Whence learn'd she this?—O she was innocent!
And to be innocent is nature's wisdom!
The fledge-dove knows the prowlers of the air,
Fear'd soon as seen, and flutters back to shelter.
And the young steed recoils upon his haunches,
The never-yet-seen adder's hiss first heard.
O surer than suspicion's hundred eyes
Is that fine sense, which to the pure in heart,
By mere oppugnancy of their own goodness,
Reveals the approach of evil. Casimir!
O fool! O parricide! through yon wood didst thou,
With fire and sword, pursue a patriot father,
A widow and an orphan. Darest thou then
(Curse-laden wretch), put forth these hands to raise
The ark, all sacred, of thy country's cause!
Look down in pity on thy son, Kiuprili;
And let this deep abhorrence of his crime,
Unstain'd with selfish fears, be his atonement!
O strengthen him to nobler compensation
In the deliverance of his bleeding country!

[*Exit* CASIMIR.

Scene changes to the mouth of a Cavern, as in Act II.
ZAPOLYA *and* GLYCINE *discovered.*

ZAPOLYA.

Our friend is gone to seek some safer cave
Do not then leave me long alone, Glycine!
Having enjoy'd thy commune, lonelincss,
That but oppress'd me hitherto, now scares.

GLYCINE.

I shall know Bethlen at the furthest distance,
And the same moment I descry him, lady,
I will return to you. [*Exit* GLYCINE.

Enter OLD BATHORY, *speaking as he enters.*

OLD BATHORY.

Who hears? A friend!
A messenger from him who bears the signet!

[ZAPOLYA, *who had been gazing affectionately after* GLYCINE, *starts at* BATHORY'S *voice.*

He hath the watch-word!—Art thou not Bathory?

OLD BATHORY.

O noble lady! greetings from your son!

[BATHORY *kneels.*

ZAPOLYA.

Rise! rise! Or shall I rather kneel beside thee,
And call down blessings from the wealth of Heaven
Upon thy honour'd head? When thou last saw'st me
I would full fain have knelt to thee, and could not,
Thou dear old man! How oft since then in dreams
Have I done worship to thee, as an angel
Bearing my helpless babe upon thy wings!

OLD BATHORY.

O he was born to honour! Gallant deeds
And perilous hath he wrought since yester-eve.
Now from Temeswar (for to him was trusted
A life, save thine, the dearest) he hastes hither—

ZAPOLYA.

Lady Sarolta mean'st thou?

OLD BATHORY.

She is safe.
The royal brute hath overleapt his prey,
And when he turn'd a sworded Virtue faced him.
My own brave boy—O pardon, noble lady!
Your son——

ZAPOLYA.

Hark! Is it he?

OLD BATHORY.

I hear a voice
Too hoarse for Bethlen's! 'T was his scheme and hope,
Long ere the hunters could approach the forest,
To have led you hence.—Retire.

ZAPOLYA.

O life of terrors!

OLD BATHORY.

In the cave's mouth we have such 'vantage ground
That even this old arm—

[*Exeunt* ZAPOLYA *and* BATHORY *into the Cave.*

Enter LASKA *and* PESTALUTZ.

LASKA.

Not a step further!

PESTALUTZ.

Dastard! was this your promise to the king?

LASKA.

I have fulfill'd his orders; have walk'd with you
As with a friend: have pointed out Lord Casimir:
And now I leave you to take care of him.
For the king's purposes are doubtless friendly.

PESTALUTZ *(affecting to start).*

Be on your guard, man!

LASKA *(in affright).*

Ha! what now?

PESTALUTZ,

Behind you
'T was one of Satan's imps, that grinn'd and threaten'd you
For your most impudent hope to cheat his master!

LASKA.

Pshaw! What, you think 't is fear that makes me leave you?

PESTALUTZ.

Is 't not enough to play the knave to others,
But thou must lie to thine own heart?

LASKA *(pompously).*

Friend! Laska will be found at his own post,
Watching elsewhere for the king's interest.
There 's a rank plot that Laska must hunt down,
'Twixt Bethlen and Glycine!

PESTALUTZ *(with a sneer).*

What! the girl
Whom Laska saw the war-wolf tear in pieces?

LASKA *(throwing down a bow and arrows).*

Well! there 's my arms! Hark! should your javelin fail you,
These points are tipt with venom.

[*Starts and sees* GLYCINE *without.*

By Heaven! Glycine!
Now, as you love the king, help me to seize her!

[*They run out after* GLYCINE, *and she shrieks without: then enter* BATHORY *from the Cavern.*

OLD BATHORY.

Rest, lady, rest! I feel in every sinew
A young man's strength returning! Which way went they?
The shriek came thence.

[*Clash of swords, and* BETHLEN'S *voice heard from behind the Scenes;* GLYCINE *enters alarmed; then, as seeing* LASKA'S *bow and arrows.*

GLYCINE.

Ha! weapons here? Then, Bethlen, thy Glycine
Will die with thee or save thee!

[*She seizes them and rushes out.* BATHORY *following her. Lively and irregular Music, and Peasants with hunting-spears cross the stage, singing chorally.*

CHORAL SONG.

Up, up! ye dames, ye lasses gay!
To the meadows trip away.
'T is you must tend the flocks this morn,
And scare the small birds from the corn.
Not a soul at home may stay:
For the shepherds must go
With lance and bow
To hunt the wolf in the woods to-day.

Leave the hearth and leave the house
To the cricket and the mouse:
Find grannam out a sunny seat,
With babe and lambkin at her feet.
Not a soul at home may stay:
For the shepherds must go
With lance and bow
To hunt the wolf in the woods to day.

Re-enter, as the Huntsmen pass off, BATHORY, BETHLEN *and* GLYCINE.

GLYCINE (*leaning on* BETHLEN).

And now once more a woman——

BETHLEN.

Was it then
That timid eye, was it those maiden hands
That sped the shaft, which saved me and avenged me?

OLD BATHORY (*to* BETHLEN *exultingly*).

'T was a vision blazon'd on a cloud
By lightning, shaped into a passionate scheme
Of life and death! I saw the traitor, Laska,
Stoop and snatch up the javelin of his comrade;
The point was at your back, when her shaft reach'd him
The coward turn'd, and at the self-same instant
The braver villain fell beneath your sword.

Enter ZAPOLYA.

ZAPOLYA.

Bethlen! my child! and safe too!

BETHLEN.

Mother! Queen!
Royal Zapolya! name me Andreas!
Nor blame thy son, if being a king, he yet
Hath made his own arm, minister of his justice.
So do the Gods who launch the thunderbolt!

ZAPOLYA.

O Raab Kiuprili! Friend! Protector! Guide!
In vain we trench'd the altar round with waters,
A flash from Heaven hath touch'd the hidden incense—

BETHLEN (*hastily*).

And that majestic form that stood beside thee
Was Raab Kiuprili!

ZAPOLYA.

It was Raab Kiuprili;
As sure as thou art Andreas, and the king.

OLD BATHORY.

Hail Andreas! hail my king! [*Triumphantly.*

ANDREAS.

Stop, thou revered one!
Lest we offend the jealous destinies
By shouts ere victory. Deem it then thy duty
To pay this homage, when 't is mine to claim it.

GLYCINE.

Accept thine hand-maid's service! [*Kneeling.*

ZAPOLYA.

Raise her, son!
O raise her to thine arms! she saved thy life,
And through her love for thee, she saved thy mother's!
Hereafter thou shalt know, that this dear maid
Hath other and hereditary claims
Upon thy heart, and with Heaven-guarded instinct
But carried on the work her sire began!

ANDREAS,

Dear maid! more dear thou canst not be! the rest
Shall make my love religion. Haste we hence:
For as I reach'd the skirts of this high forest,
I heard the noise and uproar of the chace,
Doubling its echoes from the mountain foot.

GLYCINE.

Hark! sure the hunt approaches.

[*Horn without, and afterwards distant thunder.*

ZAPOLYA.

O Kiuprili!

OLD BATHORY.

The demon-hunters of the middle air
Are in full cry, and scare with arrowy fire
The guilty! Hark! now here, now there, a horn
Swells singly with irregular blast! the tempest
Has scatter'd them!

[*Horns heard as from different places at a distance.*

ZAPOLYA.

O Heavens! where stays Kiuprili?

OLD BATHORY.

The wood will be surrounded! leave me here.

ANDREAS.

My mother! let me see *thee* once in safety,
I too will hasten back, with lightning's speed,
To seek the hero!

OLD BATHORY.

Haste! my life upon it
I 'll guide him safe.

ANDREAS (*thunder again*).

Ha! what a crash was there!
Heaven seems to claim a mightier criminal

[*Pointing without to the body of* PESTALUTZ.

Than yon vile subaltern.

ZAPOLYA.

Your behest, High powers,
Low I obey! to the appointed spirit,
That hath so long kept watch round this drear cavern,
In fervent faith, Kiuprili, I entrust thee!

[*Exeunt* ZAPOLYA, ANDREAS, *and* GLYCINE. ANDREAS *having in haste dropt his sword. Manet* BATHORY.

OLD BATHORY.

Yon bleeding corse, (*pointing to* PESTALUTZ'S *body*) may
work us mischief still:
Once seen, 't will rouse alarm and crowd the hunt
From all parts towards this spot. Stript of its armour,
I 'll drag it hither.

[*Exit* BATHORY. *After a while several Hunters cross the stage as scattered. Some time after, enter* KIUPRILI *in his disguise, fainting with fatigue, and as pursued.*

RAAB KIUPRILI (*throwing off his disguise*).

Since Heaven alone can save me, Heaven alone
Shall be my trust.

[*Then speaking as to* ZAPOLYA *in the Cavern.*

Haste! haste! Zapolya, flee!

[*He enters the Cavern, and then returns in alarm.*

Gone! Seized perhaps? Oh no, let me not perish
Despairing of Heaven's justice! Faint, disarm'd,
Each sinew powerless, senseless rock sustain me!
Thou art parcel of my native land.

[*Then observing the sword.*

A sword!
Ha! and *my* sword! Zapolya hath escaped,
The murderers are baffled, and there lives
An Andreas to avenge Kiuprili's fall!—
There was a time, when this dear sword did flash
As dreadful as the storm-fire from mine arms:
I can scarce raise it now—yet come, fell tyrant!
And bring with thee my shame and bitter anguish,
To end *his* work and thine! Kiuprili now
Can take the death-blow as a soldier should.

Re-enter BATHORY, *with the dead body of* PESTALUTZ.

OLD BATHORY.

Poor tool and victim of another's guilt!
Thou follow'st heavily: a reluctant weight!
Good truth, it is an undeserved honour
That in Zapolya and Kiuprili's cave
A wretch like thee should find a burial-place.

[*Then observing* KIUPRILI.

'T is he!—in Andreas' and Zapolya's name
Follow me, reverend form? Thou needst not speak,
For thou can'st be no other than Kiuprili!

KIUPRILI.

And are they safe?

[*Noise without.*

OLD BATHORY.

Conceal yourself, my lord!
I will mislead them!

KIUPRILI.

Is Zapolya safe?

OLD BATHORY.

I doubt it not; but haste, haste, I conjure you!

[*As he retires, in rushes* CASIMIR.

CASIMIR (*entering*).

Monster!
Thou shalt not now escape me!

OLD BATHORY.

Stop, lord Casimir!
It is no monster.

CASIMIR.

Art thou too a traitor?
Is this the place where Emerick's murderers lurk?
Say where is he that, trick'd in this disguise,
First lured me on, then scared my dastard followers?
Thou must have seen him. Say where is th' assassin?

OLD BATHORY (*pointing to the body of* PESTALUTZ).

There lies the assassin! slain by that same sword
That was descending on his curst employer,
When entering thou beheld'st Sarolta rescued!

CASIMIR.

Strange providence! what then was he who fled me?

[BATHORY *points to the Cavern, whence* KIUPRILI *advances.*

Thy looks speak fearful things! Whither, old man!
Would thy hand point me?

OLD BATHORY.

Casimir, to thy father.

CASIMIR (*discovering* KIUPRILI).

The curse! the curse! Open and swallow me,
Unsteady earth! Fall, dizzy rocks! and hide me!

OLD BATHORY (*to* KIUPRILI).

Speak, speak my lord!

KIUPRILI (*holds out the sword to* BATHORY).

Bid him fulfil his work!

CASIMIR.

Thou art Heaven's immediate minister, dread spirit!
O for sweet mercy, take some other form,
And save me from perdition and despair!

OLD BATHORY.

He lives!

CASIMIR.

Lives! A father's curse can never die!

KIUPRILI (*in a tone of pity*).

O Casimir! Casimir!

OLD BATHORY.

Look! he doth forgive you!
Hark! 't is the tyrant's voice.

[EMERICK'S *voice without.*

CASIMIR.

I kneel, I kneel!
Retract thy curse! O, by my mother's ashes,
Have pity on thy self-abhorring child!
If not for me, yet for my innocent wife,
Yet for my country's sake, give my arm strength,
Permitting me again to call thee father!

KIUPRILI.

Son, I forgive thee! Take thy father's sword;
When thou shalt lift it in thy country's cause,
In that same instant doth thy father bless thee!

[KIUPRILI *and* CASIMIR *embrace; they all retire to the Cavern supporting* KIUPRILI. CASIMIR *as by accident drops his robe, and* BATHORY *throws it over the body of* PESTALUTZ.

EMERICK (*entering*).

Fools! Cowards! follow—or by Hell I'll make you
Find reason to fear Emerick, more than all
The mummer-fiends that ever masqueraded
As gods or wood-nymphs!—

[*Then sees the body of* PESTALUTZ, *covered by* CASIMIR'S *cloak.*]

Ha! 't is done then!
Our necessary villain hath proved faithful,
And there lies Casimir, and our *last* fears!
Well!—Aye, well!——
And is it *not* well? For though grafted on us,
And fill'd too with our sap, the deadly power
Of the parent poison-tree, lurk'd in its fibres:
There was too much of Raab Kiuprili in him:
The old enemy look'd at me in his face,
E'en when his words did flatter me with duty.

[*As* EMERICK *moves towards the body, enter from the Cavern* CASIMIR *and* BATHORY.

OLD BATHORY (*pointing to where the noise is, and aside to* CASIMIR).

This way they come!

CASIMIR (*aside to* BATHORY).

Hold them in check awhile,
The path is narrow! Rudolph will assist thee.

EMERICK (*aside, not perceiving* CASIMIR *and* BATHORY, *and looking at the dead body*).

And ere I ring the alarum of my sorrow,
I 'll scan that face once more, and murmur—Here
Lies Casimir, the last of the Kiuprilis!

[*Uncovers the face, and starts.*

Hell! 't is Pestalutz!

CASIMIR (*coming forward*).

Yes, thou ingrate Emerick!
'T is Pestalutz! 't is thy trusty murderer!
To quell thee more, see Raab Kiuprili's sword!

EMERICK.

Curses on it, and thee! Think'st thou that petty omen
Dare whisper fear to Emerick's destiny?
Ho! Treason! Treason!

CASIMIR.

Then have at thee, tyrant!

[*They fight.* EMERICK *falls.*

EMERICK.

Betray'd and baffled.
By mine own tool!——Oh! [*Dies.*

CASIMIR (*triumphantly*).

Hear, hear, my father!
Thou shouldst have witness'd thine own deed. O Father!
Wake from that envious swoon! The tyrant's fallen!
Thy sword hath conquer'd! As I lifted it
Thy blessing did indeed descend upon me;
Dislodging the dread curse. It flew forth from me
And lighted on the tyrant!

Enter RUDOLPH, BATHORY, *and Attendants.*

RUDOLPH *and* BATHORY (*entering*).

Friends! friends to Casimir!

CASIMIR.

Rejoice, Illyrians! the usurper's fallen.

RUDOLPH.

So perish tyrants! so end usurpation!

CASIMIR.

Bear hence the body, and move slowly on!
One moment——
Devoted to a joy, that bears no witness,
I follow you, and we will greet our countrymen
With the two best and fullest gifts of heaven—
A tyrant fallen, a patriot chief restored!

[*Exeunt* CASIMIR *into the Cavern. The rest on the opposite side.*

Scene changes to a splendid Chamber in CASIMIR'S *Castle.* CONFEDERATES *discovered.*

FIRST CONFEDERATE.

It cannot but succeed, friends. From this palace
E'en to the wood, our messengers are posted
With such short interspace, that fast as sound
Can travel to us, we shall learn the event!

Enter another CONFEDERATE.

What tidings from Temeswar?

SECOND CONFEDERATE.

With one voice
Th' assembled chieftains have deposed the tyrant;
He is proclaim'd the public enemy,
And the protection of the law withdrawn.

FIRST CONFEDERATE.

Just doom for him, who governs without law!
Is it known on whom the sov'reignty will fall?

SECOND CONFEDERATE.

Nothing is yet decided: but report
Points to Lord Casimir. The grateful memory
Of his renown'd father——

Enter SAROLTA.

Hail to Sarolta!

SAROLTA.

Confederate friends! I bring to you a joy
Worthy our noble cause! Kiuprili lives,
And from his obscure exile, hath return'd
To bless our country. More and greater tidings
Might I disclose; but that a woman's voice
Would mar the wonderous tale. Wait we for him,
The partner of the glory—Raab Kiuprili;
For he alone is worthy to announce it.

[*Shouts of* «Kiuprili, Kiuprili!» *and* «The Tyrant's fallen!» *without. Then enter* KIUPRILI, CASIMIR, RUDOLPH, BATHORY, *and Attendants, after the clamour has subsided.*

RAAB KIUPRILI.

Spare yet your joy, my friends! A higher waits you:
Behold your Queen!

Enter from opposite side, ZAPOLYA *and* ANDREAS *royally attired, with* GLYCINE.

CONFEDERATES.

Comes she from heaven to bless us?

OTHER CONFEDERATES.

t is! it is!

ZAPOLYA.

Heaven's work of grace is full!
Kiuprili, thou art safe!

RAAB KIUPRILI.

Royal Zapolya!
To the heavenly powers, pay we our duty first;
Who not alone preserved thee, but for thee
And for our country, the one precious branch
Of Andreas' royal house. O countrymen,
Behold your King! And thank our country's genius,
That the same means which have preserved our sovereign,
Have likewise reared him worthier of the throne
By virtue than by birth. The undoubted proofs
Pledged by his royal mother, and this old man
Whose name henceforth be dear to all Illyrians),
We haste to lay before the assembled council.

ALL.

Hail Andreas! Hail, Illyria's rightful king!

ANDREAS.

Supported thus, O friends! 't were cowardice
Unworthy of a royal birth, to shrink
From the appointed charge. Yet, while we wait
The awful sanction of convened Illyria,
In this brief while, O let me feel myself
The child, the friend, the debtor!—Heroic mother!—
But what can breath add to that sacred name?
Kiuprili! gift of Providence, to teach us
That loyalty is but the public form
Of the sublimest friendship, let my youth
Climb round thee, as the vine around its elm:
Thou *my* support and *I* thy faithful fruitage.
My heart is full, and these poor words express not
They are but an art to check its overswelling.
Bathory! shrink not from my filial arms!
Now, and from henceforth thou shalt not forbid me
To call thee father! And dare I forget
The powerful intercession of thy virtue,
Lady Sarolta? Still acknowledge me
Thy faithful soldier!—But what invocation
Shall my full soul address to thee, Glycine?
Thou sword, that leap'st forth from a bed of roses!
Thou falcon-hearted dove?

ZAPOLYA.

Hear that from me, son!
For ere she lived, her father saved thy life,
Thine, and thy fugitive mother's!

CASIMIR.

Chef Ragozzi!
O shame upon my head! I would have given her
To a base slave!

ZAPOLYA.

Heaven overruled thy purpose,
And sent an angel (*Pointing to* SAROLTA) to thy house to guard her!
Thou precious bark! freighted with all our treasures!
[*To* ANDREAS.
The sports of tempests, and yet ne'er the victim,
How many may claim salvage in thee!
(*Pointing to* GLYCINE.) Take her, son!
A queen that brings with her a richer dowry
Than orient kings can give!

SAROLTA.

A banquet waits!—
On this auspicious day, for some few hours
I claim to be your hostess. Scenes so awful
With flashing light, force wisdom on us all!
E'en women at the distaff hence may see,
That bad men may rebel, but ne'er be free;
May whisper, when the waves of faction foam,
None love their country, but who love their home;
For freedom can with those alone abide,
Who wear the golden chain, with honest pride,
Of love and duty, at their own fire-side:
While mad ambition ever doth caress
Its own sure fate, in its own restlessness!

The Piccolomini; or, the First Part of Wallenstein.

A DRAMA.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN OF SCHILLER.

PREFACE.

It was my intention to have prefixed a Life of Wallenstein to this translation; but I found that it must either have occupied a space wholly disproportionate to the nature of the publication, or have been merely a meagre catalogue of events narrated not more fully than they already are in the Play itself. The recent translation, likewise, of Schiller's History of the Thirty Years' War diminished the motives thereto. In the translation I endeavoured to render my Author *literally* wherever I was not prevented by absolute differences of idiom; but I am conscious, that in two or three short passages I have been guilty of dilating the original; and, from anxiety to give the full meaning, have weakened the force. In the metre I have availed myself of no other liberties than those which Schiller had permitted to himself, except the occasional breaking-up of the line by the substitution of a trochee for an iambic; of which liberty so frequent in *our* tragedies, I find no instance in these dramas.

S. T. COLERIDGE.

THE PICCOLOMINI, ETC.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

An old Gothic Chamber in the Council House at Pilsen, decorated with Colours and other War Insignia.

ILLO *with* BUTLER *and* ISOLANI.

ILLO.

Ye have come late—but ye are come! The distance,
Count Isolan, excuses your delay.

ISOLANI.

Add this too, that we come not empty-handed.
At Donauwert[1] it was reported to us,
A Swedish caravan was on its way
Transporting a rich cargo of provision,
Almost six hundred waggons. This my Croats
Plunged down upon and seized, this weighty prize!——
We bring it hither——

ILLO.

Just in time to banquet
The illustrious company assembled here.

BUTLER.

'T is all alive! a stirring scene here!

ISOLANI.

Ay!
The very churches are all full of soldiers.
[*Casts his eye round.*
And in the Council-house too, I observe,
You 're settled, quite at home! Well, well! we soldiers
Must shift and suit us in what way we can.

ILLO.

We have the colonels here of thirty regiments.
You 'll find Count Tertsky here, and Tiefenbach,
Kolatto, Goetz, Maradas, Hinnersam,
The Piccolomini, both son and father——
You 'll meet with many an unexpected greeting
From many an old friend and acquaintance. Only
Galas is wanting still, and Altringer.

BUTLER.

Expect not Galas.

ILLO (*hesitating*).

How so? Do *you* know——

ISOLANI (*interrupting him*).

Max. Piccolomini here?—O bring me to him.
I see him yet ('t is now ten years ago,
We were engaged with Mansfeld hard by Dessau),
I see the youth, in my mind's eye I see him,
Leap his black war-horse from the bridge adown,
And t'ward his father, then in extreme peril,
Beat up against the strong tide of the Elbe.
The down was scarce upon his chin! I hear
He has made good the promise of his youth,
And the full hero now is finish'd in him.

ILLO.

You 'll see him yet ere evening. He conducts
The Duchess Friedland hither, and the Princess[2]
From Carnthen. We expect them here at noon.

[1] A town about 12 German miles N. E. of Ulm.

[2] The Dukes in Germany being always reigning powers, their sons and daughters are entitled Princes and Princesses.

BUTLER.

Both wife and daughter does the Duke call hither?
He crowds in visitants from all sides.

ISOLANI.

Hm!
So much the better! I had framed my mind
To hear of nought but warlike circumstance,
Of marches, and attacks, and batteries:
And lo! the Duke provides, that something too
Of gentler sort, and lovely, should be present
To feast our eyes.

ILLO (*who has been standing in the attitude of meditation, to* BUTLER, *whom he leads a little on one side*).

And how came you to know
That the Count Galas joins us not?

BUTLER.

Because
He importuned *me* to remain behind.

ILLO (*with warmth*).

And you?—You hold out firmly?
[*Grasping his hand with affection.*
Noble Butler!

BUTLER.

After the obligation which the Duke
Had laid so newly on me——

ILLO.

I had forgotten
A pleasant duty—Major General,
I wish you joy!

ISOLANI.

What, you mean, of his regiment?
I hear, too, that to make the gift still sweeter,
The Duke has given him the very same
In which he first saw service, and since then,
Work'd himself, step by step, through each preferment,
From the ranks upwards. And verily, it gives
A precedent of hope, a spur of action
To the whole corps, if once in their remembrance
An old deserving soldier makes his way.

BUTLER.

I am perplex'd and doubtful, whether or no
I dare accept this your congratulation.
The Emperor has not yet confirm'd the appointment.

ISOLANI.

Seize it, friend! Seize it! The hand which in that post
Placed you, is strong enough to keep you there,
Spite of the Emperor and his Ministers?

ILLO.

Ay, if we would but so consider it!—
If we would *all* of us consider it so!
The Emperor gives us nothing; from the Duke
Comes all—whate'er we hope, whate'er we have.

ISOLANI (*to* ILLO).

My noble brother! did I tell you how
The Duke will satisfy my creditors?
Will be himself my banker for the future,
Make me once more a creditable man!—
And this is now the third time, think of that!
This kingly-minded man has rescued me
From absolute ruin, and restored my honour.

ILLO.

O that his power but kept pace with his wishes!
Why, friend! he'd give the whole world to his soldiers.
But at Vienna, brother!—here 's the grievance!—
What politic schemes do they not lay to shorten

His arm, and where they can, to clip his pinions.
Then these new dainty requisitions! these,
Which this same Questenberg brings hither!—

BUTLER.

Ay!
These requisitions of the Emperor,—
I too have heard about them; but I hope
The Duke will not draw back a single inch!

ILLO.

Not from his right most surely, unless first
—From office!

BUTLER (*shocked and confused*).

Know you *aught* then? You alarm me.

ISOLANI (*at the same time with* BUTLER, *and in a hurrying voice*).

We should be ruin'd, every one of us!

ILLO.

No more!
Yonder I see *our worthy friend* [1] approaching
With the Lieutenant-General, Piccolomini.

BUTLER (*shaking his head significantly*).

I fear we shall not go hence as we came.

SCENE II.

Enter OCTAVIO PICCOLOMINI *and* QUESTENBERG.

OCTAVIO (*still in the distance*).

Ay, ay! more still! Still more new visitors!
Acknowledge, friend! that never was a camp,
Which held at once so many heads of heroes.
[*Approaching nearer.*
Welcome, Count Isolani!

ISOLANI.

My noble brother,
Even now am I arrived; it had been else my duty—

OCTAVIO.

And Colonel Butler—trust me, I rejoice
Thus to renew acquaintance with a man
Whose worth and services I know and honour.
See, see, my friend!
There might we place at once before our eyes
The sum of war's whole trade and mystery—
[*To* QUESTENBERG, *presenting* BUTLER *and* ISOLANI *at the same time to him.*
These two the total sum—Strength and Dispatch.

QUESTENBERG (*to* OCTAVIO).

And lo! betwixt them both experienced Prudence!

OCTAVIO (*presenting* QUESTENBERG *to* BUTLER *and* ISOLANI).

The Chamberlain and War-commissioner Questenberg,
The bearer of the Emperor's behests,
The long-tried friend and patron of all soldiers,
We honour in this noble visitor. [*Universal silence.*

ILLO (*moving towards* QUESTENBERG).

'T is not the first time, noble Minister,
You have shown our camp this honour.

QUESTENBERG.

Once before
I stood before these colours.

ILLO.

Perchance too you remember *where* that was.
It was at Znäim [2] in Moravia, where
You did present yourself upon the part
Of the Emperor, to supplicate our Duke
That he would straight assume the chief command.

QUESTENBERG.

To *supplicate*? Nay, noble General!
So far extended neither my commission
(At least to my own knowledge) nor my zeal.

ILLO.

Well, well, then—to *compel* him, if you chuse.
I can remember me right well, Count Tilly
Had suffer'd total rout upon the Lech.
Bavaria lay all open to the enemy,
Whom there was nothing to delay from pressing
Onwards into the very heart of Austria.
At that time you and Werdenberg appear'd
Before our General, storming him with prayers,
And menacing the Emperor's displeasure,
Unless he took compassion on this wretchedness.

ISOLANI (*steps up to them*).

Yes, yes, 't is comprehensible enough,
Wherefore with your commission of to-day
You were not all too willing to remember
Your former one.

QUESTENBERG.

Why not, Count Isolan?
No contradiction sure exists between them.
It was the urgent business of that time
To snatch Bavaria from her enemy's hand;
And my commission of to-day instructs me
To free her from her good friends and protectors.

ILLO.

A worthy office! After with our blood
We have wrested this Bohemia from the Saxon,
To be swept *out* of it is all our thanks,
The sole reward of all our hard-won victories.

QUESTENBERG.

Unless that wretched land be doomed to suffer
Only a change of evils, it must be
Freed from the scourge alike of friend and foe.

ILLO.

What? 'T was a favourable year; the boors
Can answer fresh demands already.

QUESTENBERG.

Nay,
If *you* discourse of herds and meadow-grounds—

ISOLANI.

The war maintains the war. Are the boors ruin'd,
The Emperor gains so many more new soldiers.

QUESTENBERG.

And is the poorer by even so many subjects.

ISOLANI.

Poh! We are all his subjects.

QUESTENBERG.

Yet with a difference, General! The one fill
With profitable industry the purse,
The others are well skill'd to empty it.
The sword has made the Emperor poor; the plough
Must reinvigorate his resources.

ISOLANI.

Sure!
Times are not yet so bad. Methinks I see
[*Examining with his eye the dress and ornaments of* QUESTENBERG.
Good store of gold that still remains uncoin'd.

[1] Spoken with a sneer.

[2] A town not far from the Mine-mountains, on the high road from Vienna to Prague.

QUESTENBERG.

Thank Heaven! that means have been found out to hide
Some little from the fingers of the Croats.

ILLO.

There! The Stawata and the Martinitz,
On whom the Emperor heaps his gifts and graces,
To the heart-burning of all good Bohemians—
Those minions of court favour, those court harpies,
Who fatten on the wrecks of citizens
Driven from their house and home—who reap no harvests
Save in the general calamity—
Who now, with kingly pomp, insult and mock
The desolation of their country—these,
Let these, and such as these, support the war,
The fatal war, which they alone enkindled!

BUTLER.

And those state-parasites, who have their feet
So constantly beneath the Emperor's table,
Who cannot let a benefice fall, but they
Snap at it with dog's hunger—they, forsooth,
Would pare the soldier's bread, and cross his reckoning!

ISOLANI.

My life long will it anger me to think,
How when I went to court seven years ago,
To see about new horses for our regiment,
How from one antechamber to another
They dragg'd me on, and left me by the hour
To kick my heels among a crowd of simpering
Feast-fatten'd slaves, as if I had come thither
A mendicant suitor for the crumbs of favour
That fall beneath their tables. And, at last,
Whom should they send me but a Capuchin!
Straight I began to muster up my sins
For absolution—but no such luck for *me!*
This was the man, this capuchin, with whom
I was to treat concerning the army horses:
And I was forced at last to quit the field,
The business unaccomplish'd. Afterwards
The Duke procured me in three days, what I
Could not obtain in thirty at Vienna.

QUESTENBERG.

Yes, yes! your travelling bills soon found their way to us:
Too well I know we have still accounts to settle.

ILLO.

War is a violent trade; one cannot always
Finish one's work by soft means; every trifle
Must not be blacken'd into sacrilege.
If we should wait till you, in solemn council,
With due deliberation had selected
The smallest out of four-and-twenty evils,
I' faith we should wait long.—
« Dash! and through with it!»—That 's the better watchword.
Then after come what may come. 'T is man's nature
To make the best of a bad thing once past.
A bitter and perplex'd « what shall I do?»
Is worse to man than worst necessity.

QUESTENBERG.

Ay, doubtless, it is true: the Duke *does* spare us
The troublesome task of chusing.

BUTLER.

Yes, the Duke
Cares with a father's feelings for his troops;
But how the Emperor feels for us, we see.

QUESTENBERG.

His cares and feelings all ranks share alike,
Nor will he offer one up to another.

ISOLANI.

And therefore thrusts he us into the deserts
As beasts of prey, that so he may preserve
His dear sheep fattening in his fields at home.

QUESTENBERG (*with a sneer*).

Count! this comparison you make, not I.

BUTLER.

Why, were we all the Court supposes us,
'T were dangerous, sure, to give us liberty.

QUESTENBERG.

You have taken liberty—it was not given you.
And therefore it becomes an urgent duty
To rein it in with curbs.

OCTAVIO (*interposing and addressing* QUESTENBERG).

My noble friend,
This is no more than a remembrancing
That you are now in camp, and among warriors.
The soldier's boldness constitutes his freedom.
Could he *act* daringly, unless he dared
Talk even so? One runs into the other.
The boldness of this worthy officer,
[*Pointing to* BUTLER.
Which now has but mistaken in its mark,
Preserved, when nought but boldness could preserve it,
To the Emperor his capital city, Prague,
In a most formidable mutiny
Of the whole garrison. [*Military music at a distance.*
Hah! here they come!

ILLO.

The sentries are saluting them: this signal
Announces the arrival of the Duchess.

OCTAVIO (*to* QUESTENBERG).

Then my son Max. too has returned. 'T was he
Fetch'd and attended them from Carnthen hither.

ISOLANI (*to* ILLO).

Shall we not go in company to greet them?

ILLO.

Well, let us go.—Ho! Colonel Butler, come.
[*To* OCTAVIO.
You 'll not forget, that yet ere noon we meet
The noble Envoy at the General's palace.
[*Exeunt all but* QUESTENBERG *and* OCTAVIO.

SCENE III.

QUESTENBERG *and* OCTAVIO.

QUESTENBERG (*with signs of aversion and astonishment*).

What have I not been forced to hear, Octavio!
What sentiments! what fierce, uncurb'd defiance!
And were this spirit universal—

OCTAVIO.

Hm!
You are now acquainted with three-fourths of the army.

QUESTENBERG.

Where must we seek then for a second host
To have the custody of this? That Illo
Thinks worse, I fear me, than he speaks. And then
This Butler too—he cannot even conceal
The passionate workings of his ill intentions.

OCTAVIO.

Quickness of temper—irritated pride;
'T was nothing more. I cannot give up Butler.

I know a spell that will soon dispossess
The evil spirit in *him*.

QUESTENBERG (*walking up and down in evident disquiet*).

Friend, friend!
O! this is worse, far worse, than we had suffer'd
Ourselves to dream of at Vienna. There
We saw it only with a courtier's eyes,
Eyes dazzled by the splendour of the throne.
We had not seen the War-chief, the Commander,
The man all-powerful in his camp. Here, here,
'T is quite another thing.
Here is no Emperor more—the Duke is Emperor.
Alas, my friend! alas, my noble friend!
This walk which you have ta'en me through the camp
Strikes my hopes prostrate.

OCTAVIO.

Now you see yourself
Of what a perilous kind the office is,
Which you deliver to me from the Court.
The least suspicion of the General
Costs me my freedom and my life, and would
But hasten his most desperate enterprise.

QUESTENBERG.

Where was our reason sleeping when we trusted
This madman with the sword, and placed such power
In such a hand? I tell you, he 'll refuse,
Flatly refuse, to obey the Imperial orders.
Friend, he *can* do 't, and what he can, he will.
And then the impunity of his defiance—
Oh! what a proclamation of our weakness!

OCTAVIO.

D' ye think too, he has brought his wife and daughter
Without a purpose hither? Here in camp!
And at the very point of time, in which
We 're arming for the war? That he has taken
These, the last pledges of his loyalty,
Away from out the Emperor's domains—
This is no doubtful token of the nearness
Of some eruption!

QUESTENBERG.

How shall we hold footing
Beneath this tempest, which collects itself
And threats us from all quarters? The enemy
Of the empire on our borders, now already
The master of the Danube, and still farther,
And farther still, extending every hour!
In our interior the alarum-bells
Of insurrection—peasantry in arms—
All orders discontented—and the army,
Just in the moment of our expectation
Of aidance from it—lo! this very army
Seduced, run wild, lost to all discipline,
Loosen'd, and rent asunder from the state
And from their sovereign, the blind instrument
Of the most daring of mankind, a weapon
Of fearful power, which at his will *he* wields!

OCTAVIO.

Nay, nay, friend! let us not despair too soon.
Men's words are ever bolder than their deeds:
And many a resolute, who now appears
Made up to all extremes, will, on a sudden
Find in his breast a heart he wot not of,
Let but a single honest man speak out
The true name of his crime! Remember too,
We stand not yet so wholly unprotected.
Counts Altringer and Galas have maintain'd
Their little army faithful to its duty,
And daily it becomes more numerous.
Nor can he take us by surprise: you know
I hold him all encompass'd by my listeners.
Whate'er he does, is mine, even while 't is doing—
No step so small, but instantly I hear it;
Yea, his own mouth discloses it.

QUESTENBERG.

'T is quite
Incomprehensible, that he detects not
The foe so near!

OCTAVIO.

Beware, you do not think,
That I by lying arts, and complaisant
Hypocrisy, have skulked into his graces:
Or with the substance of smooth professions
Nourish his all-confiding friendship! No—
Compell'd alike by prudence, and that duty
Which we all owe our country, and our sovereign,
To hide my genuine feelings from him, yet
Ne'er have I duped him with base counterfeits!

QUESTENBERG.

It is the visible ordinance of Heaven.

OCTAVIO.

I know not what it is that so attracts
And links him both to me and to my son.
Comrades and friends we always were—long habit,
Adventurous deeds performed in company.
And all those many and various incidents
Which store a soldier's memory with affections,
Had bound us long and early to each other—
Yet I can name the day, when all at once
His heart *rose* on me, and his confidence
Shot out in sudden growth. It was the morning
Before the memorable fight at Lützner.
Urged by an ugly dream, I sought him out,
To press him to accept another charger.
At distance from the tents, beneath a tree,
I found him in a sleep. When I had waked him,
And had related all my bodings to him,
Long time he stared upon me, like a man
Astounded: thereon fell upon my neck,
And manifested to me an emotion
That far outstripp'd the worth of that small service.
Since then his confidence has follow'd me
With the same pace that mine has fled from him.

QUESTENBERG.

You lead your son into the secret?

OCTAVIO.

No!

QUESTENBERG.

What! and not warn him either what bad hands
His lot has placed him in?

OCTAVIO.

I must perforce
Leave him in wardship to his innocence.
His young and open soul—dissimulation
Is foreign to its habits! Ignorance
Alone can keep alive the cheerful air,
The unembarrass'd sense and light free spirit,
That make the Duke secure.

QUESTENBERG (*anxiously*).

My honour'd friend! most highly do I deem
Of Colonel Piccolomini—yet—if——
Reflect a little——

OCTAVIO.

I must venture it.
Hush!—There he comes!

SCENE IV.

MAX. PICCOLOMINI, OCTAVIO PICCOLOMINI, QUESTENBERG.

MAX.

Ha! there he is himself. Welcome, my father!
[*He embraces his father. As he turns round, he observes* QUESTENBERG, *and draws back with a cold and reserved air.*
You are engaged, I see. I 'll not disturb you.

OCTAVIO.

How, Max.? Look closer at this visitor.
Attention, Max. an old friend merits—Reverence
Belongs of right to the envoy of your sovereign.

MAX. (*drily*).

Von Questenberg!—Welcome—if you bring with you
Aught good to our head-quarters.

QUESTENBERG (*seizing his hand*).

Nay, draw not
Your hand away, Count Piccolomini!
Not on mine own account alone I seized it,
And nothing common will I say therewith.
[*Taking the hands of both.*
Octavio—Max. Piccolomini!
O saviour names, and full of happy omen!
Ne'er will her prosperous genius turn from Austria,
While two such stars, with blessed influences
Beaming protection, shine above her hosts.

MAX.

Heh!—Noble minister! You miss your part.
You came not here to act a panegyric.
You 're sent, I know, to find fault and to scold us—
I must not be beforehand with my comrades.

OCTAVIO (*to* MAX.).

He comes from court, where people are not quite
So well contented with the Duke, as here.

MAX.

What now have they contrived to find out in him?
That he alone determines for himself
What he himself alone doth understand!
Well, therein he does right, and will persist in 't.
Heaven never meant him for that passive thing
That can be struck and hammer'd out to suit
Another's taste and fancy. He 'll not dance
To every tune of every minister:
It goes against his nature—he can't do it.
He is possess'd by a commanding spirit,
And his too is the station of command.
And well for us it is so! There exist
Few fit to rule themselves, but few that use
Their intellects intelligently.—Then
Well for the whole, if there be found a man,
Who makes himself what nature destined him,
The pause, the central point to thousand thousands—
Stands fixed and stately, like a firm-built column,
Where all may press with joy and confidence.
Now such a man is Wallenstein; and if
Another better suits the court—no other
But such a one as he can serve the army.

QUESTENBERG.

The army? Doubtless!

OCTAVIO (*to* QUESTENBERG).

Hush! Suppress it friend!
Unless *some* end were answer'd by the utterance.—
Of *him* there you 'll make nothing.

MAX. (*continuing*).

In their distress
They call a spirit up, and when he comes,
Straight their flesh creeps and quivers, and they dread him
More than the ills for which they call'd him up.
The uncommon, the sublime, must seem and be
Like things of every day.—But in the field,
Aye, *there* the *Present Being* makes itself felt.
The personal must command, the actual eye
Examine. If to be the chieftain asks
All that is great in nature, let it be
Likewise his privilege to move and act
In all the correspondencies of greatness.
The oracle within him, that which *lives*,
He must invoke and question—not dead books,
Not ordinances, not mould-rotted papers.

OCTAVIO.

My son! of those old narrow ordinances
Let us not hold too lightly. They are weights
Of priceless value, which oppress'd mankind
Tied to the volatile will of their oppressors.
For always formidable was the league
And partnership of free power with free will.
The way of ancient ordinance, though it winds,
Is yet no devious way. Straight forward goes
The lightning's path, and straight the fearful path
Of the cannon-ball. Direct it flies and rapid,
Shattering that it *may* reach, and shattering what it reaches.
My son! the road, the human being travels,
That, on which BLESSING comes and goes, doth follow
The river's course, the valley's playful windings,
Curves round the corn-field and the hill of vines,
Honouring the holy bounds of property!
And thus secure, though late, leads to its end.

QUESTENBERG.

O hear your father, noble youth! hear *him*,
Who is at once the hero and the man.

OCTAVIO.

My son, the nursling of the camp spoke in thee!
A war of fifteen years
Hath been thy education and thy school.
Peace hast thou never witness'd! There exists
An higher than the warrior's excellence.
In war itself war is no ultimate purpose.
The vast and sudden deeds of violence,
Adventures wild, and wonders of the moment,
These are not they, my son, that generate
The Calm, the Blissful, and the enduring Mighty!
Lo there! the soldier, rapid architect!
Builds his light town of canvas, and at once
The whole scene moves and bustles momently,
With arms, and neighing steeds, and mirth and quarrel
The motley market fills; the roads, the streams
Are crowded with new freights, trade stirs and hurries!
But on some morrow morn, all suddenly,
The tents drop down, the horde renews its march.
Dreary, and solitary as a church-yard
The meadow and down-trodden seed-plot lie,
And the year's harvest is gone utterly.

MAX.

O let the Emperor make peace, my father!
Most gladly would I give the blood-stained laurel
For the first violet [1] of the leafless spring,
Pluck'd in those quiet fields where I have journey'd!

OCTAVIO.

What ails thee! What so moves thee all at once?

MAX.

Peace have I ne'er beheld? I *have* beheld it.
From thence am I come hither: O! that sight,
It glimmers still before me, like some landscape
Left in the distance,—some delicious landscape!
My road conducted me through countries where
The war has not yet reach'd. Life, life, my father—
My venerable father, Life has charms
Which *we* have ne'er experienced. We have been
But voyaging along its barren coasts,
Like some poor ever-roaming horde of pirates,
That, crowded in the rank and narrow ship,
House on the wild sea with wild usages,
Nor know aught of the main land, but the bays
Where safeliest they may venture a thieves' landing.
What'er in the inland dales the land conceals
Of fair and exquisite, O! nothing, nothing,
Do we behold of that in our rude voyage.

OCTAVIO (*attentive, with an appearance of uneasiness*).

And so your journey has reveal'd this to you?

MAX.

'T was the first leisure of my life. O tell me,
What is the meed and purpose of the toil,
The painful toil, which robb'd me of my youth,
Left me an heart unsoul'd and solitary,
A spirit uninform'd, unornamented.
For the camp's stir and crowd and ceaseless larum,
The neighing war-horse, the air-shattering trumpet,
The unvaried, still returning hour of duty,
Word of command, and exercise of arms—
There 's nothing here, there 's nothing in all this
To satisfy the heart, the gasping heart!
Mere bustling nothingness, where the soul is not—
This cannot be the sole felicity,
These cannot be man's best and only pleasures!

OCTAVIO.

Much hast thou learnt, my son, in this short journey.

MAX.

O! day thrice lovely! when at length the soldier
Returns home into life; when he becomes
A fellow-man among his fellow-men.
The colours are unfurl'd, the cavalcade
Marshals, and now the buzz is hush'd, and hark!
Now the soft peace-march beats, home, brothers, home!
The caps and helmets are all garlanded
With green boughs, the last plundering of the fields.
The city gates fly open of themselves,
They need no longer the petard to tear them.
The ramparts are all fill'd with men and women,
With peaceful men and women, that send onwards
Kisses and welcomings upon the air,
Which they make breezy with affectionate gestures.
From all the towers rings out the merry peal,
The joyous vespers of a bloody day.
O happy man, O fortunate! for whom
The well-known door, the faithful arms are open,
The faithful tender arms with mute embracing.

QUESTENBERG (*apparently much affected*).

O! that you should speak
Of such a distant, distant time, and not
Of the to-morrow, not of this to-day.

MAX (*turning round to him, quick and vehement*).

Where lies the fault but on you in Vienna!
I will deal openly with you, Questenberg.
Just now, as first I saw you standing here,
(I 'll own it to you freely) indignation
Crowded and press'd my inmost soul together.
'T is ye that hinder peace, *ye!*—and the warrior,
It is the warrior that must force it from you.
Ye fret the General's life out, blacken him,
Hold him up as a rebel, and Heaven knows
What else still worse, because he spares the Saxons,
And tries to awaken confidence in the enemy;
Which yet's the only way to peace: for if
War intermit not during war, *how* then
And *whence* can peace come?—Your own plagues fall on you!
Even as I love what 's virtuous, hate I you.
And here make I this vow, here pledge myself;
My blood shall spurt out for this Wallenstein,
And my heart drain off, drop by drop, ere ye
Shall revel and dance jubilee o'er his ruin. [*Exit.*

[1] In the original,

Den blut'gen Lorbeer geb ich hin mit Freuden
Fürs erste Veilchen, das der Mærz uns bringt,
Das dürftige Pfand der neuverjüngten Erde.

SCENE V.

QUESTENBERG, OCTAVIO PICCOLOMINI.

QUESTENBERG.

Alas, alas! and stands it so?
[*Then in pressing and impatient tones.*
What, friend! and do we let him go away
In this delusion—let him go away?
Not call him back immediately, not open
His eyes upon the spot?

OCTAVIO (*recovering himself out of a deep study*).

He has now open'd mine,
And I see more than pleases me.

QUESTENBERG.

What is it?

OCTAVIO.

Curse on this journey!

QUESTENBERG.

But why so? What is it?

OCTAVIO.

Come, come along, friend! I must follow up
The ominous track immediately. Mine eyes
Are open'd now, and I must use them. Come!
[*Draws* QUESTENBERG *on with him.*

QUESTENBERG.

What now? *Where* go you then?

OCTAVIO.

To her herself.

QUESTENBERG.

To——

OCTAVIO (*interrupting him, and correcting himself*).

To the Duke. Come let us go—'T is done, 't is done,
I see the net that is thrown over him.
Oh! he returns not to me as he went.

QUESTENBERG.

Nay, but explain yourself.

OCTAVIO.

And that I should not
Foresee it, not prevent this journey! Wherefore
Did I keep it from him?—You were in the right.
I should have warn'd him! Now it is too late.

QUESTENBERG.

But *what's* too late? Bethink yourself, my friend,
That you are talking absolute riddles to me.

OCTAVIO (*more collected*).

Come! to the Duke's. 'T is close upon the hour.
Which he appointed you for audience. Come!
A curse, a threefold curse, upon this journey!

[*He leads* QUESTENBERG *off.*

SCENE VI.

Changes to a spacious Chamber in the House of the Duke of Friedland. — Servants employed in putting the tables and chairs in order. During this enters SENI, *like an old Italian doctor, in black, and clothed somewhat fantastically. He carries a white staff, with which he marks out the quarters of the heaven.*

FIRST SERVANT.

Come—to it, lads, to it! Make an end of it. I hear the sentry call out, « Stand to your arms!» They will be there in a minute.

SECOND SERVANT.

Why were we not told before that the audience would be held here? Nothing prepared—no orders—no instructions—

THIRD SERVANT.

Ay, and why was the balcony-chamber countermanded, that with the great worked carpet?—there one can look about one.

FIRST SERVANT.

Nay, that you must ask the mathematician there. He says it is an unlucky chamber.

SECOND SERVANT.

Poh! stuff and nonsense! That 's what I call a *hum*. A chamber is a chamber; what much can the place signify in the affair?

SENI (*with gravity*).

My son, there 's *nothing* insignificant,
Nothing! But yet in every earthly thing
First and most principal is place and time.

FIRST SERVANT (*to the second*).

Say nothing to him, Nat. The Duke himself must let him have his own will.

SENI (*counts the chairs, half in a loud, half in a low voice, till he comes to eleven, which he repeats*).

Eleven! an evil number! Set twelve chairs.
Twelve! twelve signs hath the zodiac: five and seven,
The holy numbers, include themselves in twelve.

SECOND SERVANT.

And what may you have to object against eleven? I should like to know that now.

SENI.

Eleven is transgression; eleven oversteps
The ten commandments.

SECOND SERVANT.

That 's good! and why do you call five an holy number?

SENI.

Five is the soul of man: for even as man
Is mingled up of good and evil, so
The five is the first number that 's made up
Of even and odd.

SECOND SERVANT.

The foolish old coxcomb!

FIRST SERVANT.

Ey! let him alone though. I like to hear him; there is more in his words than can be seen at first sight.

THIRD SERVANT.

Off, they come.

SECOND SERVANT.

There! Out at the side-door.

[*They hurry off.* SENI *follows slowly. A Page brings the staff of command on a red cushion, and places it on the table near the Duke's chair. They are announced from without, and the wings of the door fly open.*

SCENE VII.

WALLENSTEIN, DUCHESS.

WALLENSTEIN.

You went then through Vienna, were presented
To the Queen of Hungary?

DUCHESS.

Yes; and to the Empress too,
And by both Majesties were we admitted
To kiss the hand.

WALLENSTEIN.

And how was it received,
That I had sent for wife and daughter hither
To the camp, in winter-time?

DUCHESS.

I did even that
Which you commission'd me to do. I told them,
You had determined on our daughter's marriage,
And wish'd, ere yet you went into the field,
To show the elected husband his betrothed.

WALLENSTEIN.

And did they guess the choice which I had made?

DUCHESS.

They only hoped and wish'd it may have fallen
Upon no foreign nor yet Lutheran noble.

WALLENSTEIN.

And you—what do *you* wish, Elizabeth?

DUCHESS.

Your will, you know, was always mine.

WALLENSTEIN (*after a pause*).

Well then?
And in all else, of what kind and complexion
Was your reception at the court?

[*The* DUCHESS *casts her eyes on the ground, and remains silent.*

Hide nothing from me. How were you received?

DUCHESS.

O! my dear lord, all is not what it was.
A canker-worm, my lord, a canker-worm
Has stolen into the bud.

WALLENSTEIN.

Ay! is it so!
What, they were lax? they fail'd of the old respect?

DUCHESS.

Not of respect. No honours were omitted,
No outward courtesy; but in the place
Of condescending, confidential kindness,
Familiar and endearing, there were given me

Only these honours and that solemn courtesy.
Ah! and the tenderness which was put on,
It was the guise of pity, not of favour.
No! Albrecht's wife, Duke Albrecht's princely wife,
Count Harrach's noble daughter, should not *so*—
Not wholly so should she have been received.

WALLENSTEIN.

Yes, yes; they have ta'en offence. My latest conduct,
They rail'd at it, no doubt.

DUCHESS.

O that they had!
I have been long accustom'd to defend you,
To heal and pacify distemper'd spirits.
No; no one rail'd at you. They wrapp'd them up,
O Heaven! in such oppressive, solemn silence!—
Here is no every-day misunderstanding,
No transient pique, no cloud that passes over;
Something most luckless, most unhealable,
Has taken place. The Queen of Hungary
Used formerly to call me her dear aunt,
And ever at departure to embrace me—

WALLENSTEIN.

Now she omitted it?

DUCHESS (*wiping away her tears, after a pause*).

She *did* embrace me,
But then first when I had already taken
My formal leave, and when the door already
Had closed upon me, then did she come out
In haste, as she had suddenly bethought herself,
And press'd me to her bosom, more with anguish
Than tenderness.

WALLENSTEIN (*seizes her hand soothingly*).

Nay, now collect yourself.
And what of Eggenberg and Lichtenstein,
And of our other friends there?

DUCHESS (*shaking her head*).

I saw none.

WALLENSTEIN.

The Ambassador from Spain, who once was wont
To plead so warmly for me?—

DUCHESS.

Silent, silent!

WALLENSTEIN.

These suns then are eclipsed for us. Henceforward
Must we roll on, our own fire, our own light.

DUCHESS.

And were it—were it, my dear lord, in that
Which moved about the court in buzz and whisper,
But in the country let itself be heard
Aloud—in that which Father Lamormain
In sundry hints and——

WALLENSTEIN (*eagerly*).

Lamormain! what said *he?*

DUCHESS.

That you 're accused of having daringly
O'erstepp'd the powers entrusted to you, charged
With traitorous contempt of the Emperor
And his supreme behests. The proud Bavarian,
He and the Spaniards stand up your accusers—
That there's a storm collecting over you
Of far more fearful menace than that former one
Which whirl'd you headlong down at Regensburg.
And people talk, said he, of——Ah!—

[*Stifling extreme emotion.*

WALLENSTEIN.

Proceed!

DUCHESS.

I cannot utter it!

WALLENSTEIN.

Proceed!

DUCHESS.

They talk——

WALLENSTEIN.

Well!

DUCHESS.

Of a second——(*catches her voice and hesitates*).

WALLENSTEIN.

Second——

DUCHESS.

More disgraceful
——Dismission.

WALLENSTEIN.

Talk they?

Strides across the Chamber in vehement agitation.

O! they force, they thrust me
With violence against my own will, onward!

DUCHESS (*presses near to him, in entreaty*).

O! if there yet be time, my husband! if
By giving way and by submission, this
Can be averted—my dear lord, give way!
Win down your proud heart to it! Tell that heart,
It is your sovereign lord, your Emperor
Before whom you retreat. O let no longer
Low tricking malice blacken your good meaning
With abhorr'd venomous glosses. Stand you up
Shielded and helm'd and weapon'd with the truth,
And drive before you into uttermost shame
These slanderous liars! Few firm friends have we—
You know it!—The swift growth of our good fortune,
It hath but set us up a mark for hatred.
What are we, if the sovereign's grace and favour
Stand not before us!

SCENE VIII.

Enter the Countess TERTSKY, *leading in her hand the Princess* THEKLA, *richly adorned with Brilliants.*

COUNTESS, THEKLA, WALLENSTEIN, DUCHESS.

COUNTESS.

How, sister! What, already upon business;

[*Observing the countenance of the* DUCHESS.

And business of no pleasing kind I see,
Ere he has gladden'd at his child. The first
Moment belongs to joy. Here, Friedland! father!
This is thy daughter.

[THEKLA *approaches with a shy and timid air, and bends herself as about to kiss his hand. He receives her in his arms, and remains standing for some time lost in the feeling of her presence.*

WALLENSTEIN.

Yes! pure and lovely hath hope risen on me:
I take her as the pledge of greater fortune.

DUCHESS.

'T was but a little child when you departed
To raise up that great army for the Emperor:
And after, at the close of the campaign,
When you return'd home out of Pomerania,
Your daughter was already in the convent,
Wherein she has remain'd till now.

WALLENSTEIN.

The while

We in the field here gave our cares and toils
To make her great, and fight her a free way
To the loftiest earthly good; lo! mother Nature
Within the peaceful silent convent walls
Has done her part, and out of her free grace
Hath she bestow'd on the beloved child
The godlike; and now leads her thus adorn'd
To meet her splendid fortune, and my hope.

DUCHESS *(to* THEKLA).

Thou wouldst not have recognized thy father,
Wouldst thou, my child? She counted scarce eight years,
When last she saw your face.

THEKLA.

O yes, yes, mother!
At the first glance!—My father is not alter'd.
The form that stands before me falsifies
No feature of the image that hath lived
So long within me!

WALLENSTEIN.

The voice of my child!
[Then after a pause.
I was indignant at my destiny,
That it denied me a man-child to be
Heir of my name and of my prosperous fortune,
And re-illume my soon extinguish'd being
In a proud line of princes.
I wrong'd my destiny. Here upon this head,
So lovely in its maiden bloom, will I
Let fall the garland of a life of war,
Nor deem it lost, if only I can wreath it,
Transmitted to a regal ornament,
Around these beauteous brows,
[He clasps her in his arms as PICCOLOMINI *enters.*

SCENE IX.

Enter MAX. PICCOLOMINI, *and some time after Count* TERTSKY, *the others remaining as before.*

COUNTESS.

There comes the Paladin who protected us.

WALLENSTEIN.

Max.! Welcome, ever welcome! Always wert thou
The morning star of my best joys!

MAX.

My General——

WALLENSTEIN.

Till now it was the Emperor who rewarded thee,
I but the instrument. This day thou hast bound
The father to thee, Max! the fortunate father,
And this debt Friedland's self must pay.

MAX.

My prince!
You made no common hurry to transfer it.
I come with shame: yea, not without a pang!
For scarce have I arrived here, scarce deliver'd
The mother and the daughter to your arms,
But there is brought to me from your equerry
A splendid richly-plated hunting dress
So to remunerate me for my troubles——
Yes, yes, remunerate me! Since a trouble
It must be, a mere office, not a favour
Which I leapt forward to receive, and which
I came already with full heart to thank you for.
No! 't was not so intended, that my business
Should be my highest best good-fortune!

*[*TERTSKY *enters, and delivers letters to the* DUKE, *which he breaks open hurryingly.*

COUNTESS *(to* MAX.).

Remunerate your trouble! For his joy
He makes you recompense. 'T is not unfitting
For you, Count Piccolomini, to feel
So tenderly—my brother it beseems
To show himself for ever great and princely.

THEKLA.

Then I too must have scruples of his love:
For his munificent hands did ornament me
Ere yet the father's heart had spoken to me.

MAX.

Yes; 't is his nature ever to be giving
And making happy.

[He grasps the hand of the DUCHESS *with still increasing warmth.*

How my heart pours out
Its all of thanks to him! O! how I seem
To utter all things in the dear name Friedland.
While I shall live, so long will I remain
The captive of this name: in it shall bloom
My every fortune, every lovely hope.
Inextricably as in some magic ring
In this name hath my destiny charm-bound me!

COUNTESS *(who during this time has been anxiously watching the* DUKE, *and remarks that he is lost in thought over the letters).*

My brother wishes us to leave him. Come.

WALLENSTEIN *(turns himself round quick, collects himself, and speaks with cheerfulness to the* DUCHESS).

Once more I bid thee welcome to the camp,
Thou art the hostess of this court. You, Max.
Will now again administer your old office,
While we perform the sovereign's business here.

*[*MAX. PICCOLOMINI *offers the* DUCHESS *his arm; the* COUNTESS *accompanies the* PRINCESS.

TERTSKY *(calling after him).*

Max., we depend on seeing you at the meeting.

SCENE X.

WALLENSTEIN, COUNT TERTSKY.

WALLENSTEIN *(in deep thought to himself).*

She hath seen all things as they are—It is so,
And squares completely with my other notices.
They have determined finally in Vienna,
Have given me my successor already;
It is the king of Hungary, Ferdinand,
The Emperor's delicate son! he 's now their saviour,
He 's the new star that 's rising now! Of us
They think themselves already fairly rid,
And as we were deceased, the heir already
Is entering on possession—Therefore—dispatch!

[As he turns round he observes TERTSKY, *and gives him a letter.*

Count Altringer will have himself excused,
And Galas too—I like not this!

TERTSKY.

And if
Thou loiterest longer, all will fall away,
One following the other.

WALLENSTEIN.

Altringer

Is master of the Tyrol passes. I must forthwith
Send some one to him, that he let not in
The Spaniards on me from the Milanese.
——Well, and the old Sesin, that ancient trader
In contraband negociations, he
Has shown himself again of late. What brings he
From the Count Thur?

TERTSKY.

The Count communicates,
He has found out the Swedish chancellor
At Halberstadt, where the convention 's held,
Who says, you 've tired him out, and that he 'll have
No further dealings with you.

WALLENSTEIN.

And why so?

TERTSKY.

He says, you are never in earnest in your speeches;
That you decoy the Swedes—to make fools of them;
Will league yourself with Saxony against them,
And at last make yourself a riddance of them
With a paltry sum of money.

WALLENSTEIN.

So then, doubtless,
Yes, doubtless, this same modest Swede expects
That I shall yield him some fair German tract
For his prey and booty, that ourselves at last
On our own soil and native territory,
May be no longer our own lords and masters!
An excellent scheme! No, no! They must be off,
Off, off! away! *we* want no such neighbours.

TERTSKY.

Nay, yield them up that dot, that speck of land—
It goes not from your portion. If you win
The game, what matters it to you who pays it?

WALLENSTEIN,

Off with them, off! Thou understand'st not this.
Never shall it be said of me, I parcell'd
My native land away, dismember'd Germany,
Betray'd it to a foreigner, in order
To come with stealthy tread, and filch away
My own share of the plunder—Never! never!—
No foreign power shall strike root in the empire,
And least of all, these Goths! these hunger-wolves!
Who send such envious, hot and greedy glances
Towards the rich blessings of our German lands!
I 'll have their aid to cast and draw my nets,
But not a single fish of all the draught
Shall they come in for.

TERTSKY.

You will deal, however,
More fairly with the Saxons? They lose patience
While you shift ground and make so many curves.
Say, to what purpose all these masks? Your friends
Are plunged in doubts, baffled, and led astray in you.
There 's Oxenstein, there 's Arnheim—neither knows
What he should think of your procrastinations.
And in the end I prove the liar; all
Passes through me. I have not even your hand-writing.

WALLENSTEIN.

I *never* give my hand-writing; thou knowest it.

TERTSKY.

But how can it be *known* that you 're in earnest,
If the act follows not upon the word?
You must yourself acknowledge, that in all
Your intercourses hitherto with the enemy,
You might have done with safety all you have done,
Had you meant nothing further than to gull him
For the Emperor's service.

WALLENSTEIN (*after a pause, during which he looks narrowly on* TERTSKY).

And from whence dost *thou* know
That I 'm *not* gulling him for the Emperor's service?
Whence knowest thou that I 'm not gulling all of you?
Dost thou know *me* so well! When made I thee
The intendant of my secret purposes?
I am not conscious that I ever open'd
My inmost thoughts to thee. The Emperor, it is true,
Hath dealt with me amiss; and if I *would*,
I could repay him with usurious interest
For the evil he hath done me. It delights me
To know my *power;* but whether I shall use it,
Of that, I should have thought that thou couldst speak
No wiselier than thy fellows.

TERTSKY.

So hast thou always played thy game with us.

[*Enter* ILLO.

SCENE XI.

ILLO, WALLENSTEIN, TERTSKY.

WALLENSTEIN.

How stand affairs without? Are they prepared?

ILLO.

You 'll find them in the very mood you wish.
They know about the Emperor's requisitions,
And are tumultuous.

WALLENSTEIN.

How hath Isolan
Declared himself?

ILLO.

He 's your's, both soul and body,
Since you built up again his Faro-bank.

WALLENSTEIN.

And which way doth Kolatto bend? Hast thou
Made sure of Tiefenbach and Deodate?

ILLO.

What Piccolomini does, that they do too.

WALLENSTEIN.

You mean, then, I may venture somewhat with them?

ILLO.

—If you are assured of the Piccolomini.

WALLENSTEIN.

Not more assured of mine own self.

TERTSKY.

And yet
I would you trusted not so much to Octavio,
The fox!

WALLENSTEIN.

Thou teachest me to know my man?
Sixteen campaigns I have made with that old warrior.
Besides, I have his horoscope:
We both are born beneath like stars—in short
[*With an air of mystery.*
To this belongs its own particular aspect,
If therefore thou canst warrant me the rest——

ILLO.

There is among them all but this one voice,
You *must* not lay down the command. I hear
They mean to send a deputation to you.

WALLENSTEIN.

If I 'm in aught to bind myself to them,
They too must bind themselves to me.

ILLO.

Of course.

WALLENSTEIN.

Their words of honour they must give, their oaths,
Give them in writing to me, promising
Devotion to my service *unconditional*.

ILLO.

Why not?

TERTSKY.

Devotion *unconditional?*
The exception of their duties towards Austria
They 'll always place among the premises.
With this reserve——

WALLENSTEIN (*shaking his head*).

All *unconditional!*
No premises, no reserves.

ILLO.

A thought has struck me.
Does not Count Tertsky give us a set banquet
This evening?

TERTSKY.

Yes; and all the Generals
Have been invited.

ILLO (*to* WALLENSTEIN.)

Say, will you here fully
Commission me to use my own discretion?
I 'll gain for you the Generals' words of honour,
Even as you wish.

WALLENSTEIN.

Gain me their signatures!
How you come by them, that is *your* concern.

ILLO.

And if I bring it to you, black on white,
That all the leaders who are present here
Give themselves up to you, without condition;
Say, will you *then—then* will you show yourself
In earnest, and with some decisive action
Make trial of your luck?

WALLENSTEIN.

The signatures!
Gain me the signatures.

ILLO.

Seize, seize the hour,
Ere it slips from you. Seldom comes the moment
In life, which is indeed sublime and weighty.
To make a great decision possible,
O! many things, all transient and all repaid,
Must meet at once: and, haply, they thus met
May by that confluence be enforced to pause
Time long enough for wisdom, though too short,
Far, far too short a time for doubt and scruple!
This is that moment. See, our army chieftains,
Our best, our noblest, are assembled around you,
Their king-like leader! On your nod they wait.
The single threads, which here your prosperous fortune
Hath woven together in one potent web
Instinct with destiny, O let them not
Unravel of themselves. If you permit
These chiefs to separate, so unanimous
Bring you them not a second time together.
'T is the high tide that heaves the stranded ship,
And every individual's spirit waxes
In the great stream of multitudes. Behold
They are still here, here still! But soon the war
Bursts them once more asunder, and in small
Particular anxieties and interests
Scatters their spirit, and the sympathy
Of each man with the whole. He, who to-day
Forgets himself, forced onward with the stream,
Will become sober, seeing but himself,
Feel only his own weakness, and with speed
Will face about, and march on in the old
High road of duty, the old broad-trodden road,
And seek but to make shelter in good plight.

WALLENSTEIN.

The time is not yet come.

TERTSKY.

So you say always.
But *when* will it be time?

WALLENSTEIN.

When I shall say it.

ILLO.

You 'll wait upon the stars, and on their hours,
Till the earthly hour escapes you. O, believe me,
In your own bosom are your destiny's stars.
Confidence in yourself, prompt resolution,
This is your Venus! and the sole malignant,
The only one that harmeth you, is Doubt.

WALLENSTEIN.

Thou speakest as thou understand'st. How oft
And many a time I 've told thee, Jupiter,
That lustrous god, was setting at thy birth.
Thy visual power subdues no mysteries;
Mole-eyed, thou mayest but burrow in the earth,
Blind as that subterrestrial, who with wan,
Lead-colour'd shine lighted thee into life.
The common, the terrestrial, thou mayest see,
With serviceable cunning knit together
The nearest with the nearest; and therein
I trust thee and believe thee! but whate'er
Full of mysterious import Nature weaves,
And fashions in the depths—the spirit's ladder,
That from this gross and visible world of dust
Even to the starry world, with thousand rounds,
Builds itself up; on which the unseen powers
Move up and down on heavenly ministeries—
The circles in the circles, that approach
The central sun with ever-narrowing orbit—
These see the glance alone, the unsealed eye,
Of Jupiter's glad children born in lustre.

[*He walks across the Chamber, then returns, and standing still, proceeds.*

The heavenly constellations make not merely
The day and nights, summer and spring, not merely
Signify to the husbandman the seasons
Of sowing and of harvest. Human action,
That is the seed too of contingencies,
Strew'd on the dark land of futurity
In hopes to reconcile the powers of fate.
Whence it behoves us to seek out the seed-time,
To watch the stars, select their proper hours,
And trace with searching eye the heavenly houses,
Whether the enemy of growth and thriving
Hide himself not, malignant, in his corner.
Therefore permit me my own time. Meanwhile
Do you your part. As yet I cannot say
What *I* shall do—only, give way I will not.
Depose me too they shall not. On these points
You may rely.

PAGE (*entering*).

My Lords, the Generals.

WALLENSTEIN.

Let them come in.

SCENE XII.

WALLENSTEIN, TERTSKY, ILLO.—*To them enter* QUESTENBERG, OCTAVIO, *and* MAX. PICCOLOMINI, BUTLER, ISOLANI, MARADAS, *and three other Generals.* WALLENSTEIN *motions* QUESTENBERG, *who in consequence takes the chair directly opposite to him; the others follow, arranging themselves according to their rank. There reigns a momentary silence.*

WALLENSTEIN.

I have understood, 't is true, the sum and import
Of your instructions, Questenberg; have weighed them,
And formed my final, absolute resolve:
Yet it seems fitting, that the Generals
Should hear the will of the Emperor from your mouth.
May 't please you then to open your commission
Before these noble Chieftains?

QUESTENBERG.

I am ready
To obey you; but will first entreat your Highness,
And all these noble Chieftains, to consider,
The Imperial dignity and sovereign right
Speaks from my mouth, and not my own presumption.

WALLENSTEIN.

We excuse all preface.

QUESTENBERG.

When his Majesty
The Emperor to his courageous armies
Presented in the person of Duke Friedland
A most experienced and renown'd commander,
He did it in glad hope and confidence
To give thereby to the fortune of the war
A rapid and auspicious change. The onset
Was favourable to his royal wishes.
Bohemia was delivered from the Saxons,
The Swede's career of conquest check'd! These lands
Began to draw breath freely, as Duke Friedland
From all the streams of Germany forced hither
The scatter'd armies of the enemy;
Hither invoked as round one magic circle
The Rhinegrave, Bernhard, Banner, Oxenstein,
Yea, and that never-conquer'd King himself;
Here finally, before the eye of Nürnberg,
The fearful game of battle to decide.

WALLENSTEIN.

May 't please you, to the point.

QUESTENBERG.

In Nürnberg's camp the Swedish monarch left
His fame—in Lützen's plains his life. But who
Stood not astounded, when victorious Friedland
After this day of triumph, this proud day,
March'd toward Bohemia with the speed of flight,
And vanish'd from the theatre of war;
While the young Weimar hero forced his way
Into Franconia, to the Danube, like
Some delving winter-stream, which, where it rushes,
Makes its own channel; with such sudden speed
He marched, and now at once 'fore Regenspurg
Stood to the affright of all good Catholic Christians.
Then did Bavaria's well-deserving Prince
Entreat swift aidance in his extreme need;
The Emperor sends seven horsemen to Duke Friedland,
Seven horsemen couriers sends he with the entreaty:
He supersedes his own, and supplicates
Where as the sovereign lord he can command.
In vain his supplication! At this moment
The Duke hears only his old hate and grudge,
Barters the general good to gratify
Private revenge—and so falls Regenspurg.

WALLENSTEIN.

Max., to what period of the war alludes he?
My recollection fails me here?

MAX.

He means
When we were in Silesia.

WALLENSTEIN.

Ay! is it so?
But what had we to do *there?*

MAX.

To beat out
The Swedes and Saxons from the province.

WALLENSTEIN.

True;
In that description which the Minister gave
I seemed to have forgotten the whole war.
(*To* QUESTENBERG.)
Well, but proceed a little.

QUESTENBERG.

Yes; at length
Beside the river Oder did the Duke
Assert his ancient fame. Upon the fields
Of Steinau did the Swedes lay down their arms,
Subdued without a blow. And here, with others,
The righteousness of Heaven to his avenger
Deliver'd that long-practised stirrer-up
Of insurrection, that curse-laden torch
And kindler of this war, Matthias Thur.
But he had fallen into magnanimous hands;
Instead of punishment he found reward,
And with rich presents did the Duke dismiss
The arch-foe of his Emperor.

WALLENSTEIN (*laughs*).

I know,
I know you had already in Vienna
Your windows and balconies all forestall'd
To see him on the executioner's cart.
I might have lost the battle, lost it too
With infamy, and still retain'd your graces—
But, to have cheated them of a spectacle,
Oh! *that* the good folks of Vienna never,
No, never can forgive me!

QUESTENBERG.

So Silesia
Was freed, and all things loudly called the Duke
Into Bavaria, now press'd hard on all sides.
And he *did* put his troops in motion: slowly,
Quite at his ease, and by the longest road
He traverses Bohemia; but ere ever
He hath once seen the enemy, faces round,
Breaks up the march, and takes to winter-quarters.

WALLENSTEIN.

The troops were pitiably destitute
Of every necessary, every comfort.
The winter came. What thinks his Majesty
His troops are made of? An't we men? subjected
Like other men to wet, and cold, and all
The circumstances of necessity?
O miserable lot of the poor soldier!
Wherever he comes in, all flee before him,
And when he goes away, the general curse
Follows him on his route. All must be seized,

Nothing is given him. And compell'd to seize
From every man, he 's every man's abhorrence.
Behold, here stand my Generals. Karaffa!
Count Deodate! Butler! Tell this man
How long the soldiers' pay is in arrears.

BUTLER.

Already a full year.

WALLENSTEIN.

And 't is the hire
That constitutes the hireling's name and duties,
The soldier's *pay* is the soldier's *covenant*.[1]

QUESTENBERG.

Ah! this is a far other tone from that,
In which the Duke spoke eight, nine years ago.

WALLENSTEIN.

Yes! 't is my fault, I know it: I myself
Have spoilt the Emperor by indulging him.
Nine years ago, during the Danish war,
I raised him up a force, a mighty force,
Forty or fifty thousand men, that cost him
Of his own purse no doit. Through Saxony
The fury goddess of the war march'd on,
E'en to the surf-rocks of the Baltic, bearing
The terrors of his name. That was a time!
In the whole Imperial realm no name like mine
Honour'd with festival and celebration—
And Albrecht Wallenstein, it was the title
Of the third jewel in his crown!
But at the Diet, when the Princes met
At Regensburg, there, there the whole broke out,
There 't was laid open, there it was made known,
Out of what money-bag I had paid the host.
And what was now my thank, what had I now,
That I, a faithful servant of the Sovereign,
Had loaded on myself the people's curses,
And let the Princes of the empire pay
The expenses of this war, that aggrandizes
The Emperor alone—What thanks had I!
What? I was offer'd up to their complaints,
Dismiss'd, degraded!

QUESTENBERG.

But your Highness knows
What little freedom he possess'd of action
In that disastrous diet.

WALLENSTEIN.

Death and hell!
I had that which could have procured him freedom.
No! Since 't was proved so inauspicious to me
To serve the Emperor at the empire's cost,
I have been taught far other trains of thinking
Of the empire, and the diet of the empire.
From the Emperor, doubtless, I received this staff,
But now I hold it as the empire's general—
For the common weal, the universal interest,
And no more for that one man's aggrandizement!
But to the point. What is it that 's desired of me?

QUESTENBERG.

First, his imperial Majesty hath will'd
That without pretexts of delay the army
Evacuate Bohemia.

WALLENSTEIN.

In this season?
And to what quarter wills the Emperor
That we direct our course?

QUESTENBERG.

To the enemy.
His Majesty resolves, that Regensburg
Be purified from the enemy ere Easter,
That Lutheranism may be no longer preach'd
In that cathedral, nor heretical
Defilement desecrate the celebration
Of that pure festival.

WALLENSTEIN.

My generals,
Can this be realized?

ILLO.

'T is not possible.

BUTLER.

It can't be realized.

QUESTENBERG.

The Emperor
Already hath commanded colonel Suys
To advance toward Bavaria.

WALLENSTEIN.

What did Suys?

QUESTENBERG.

That which his duty prompted. He advanced!

WALLENSTEIN.

What! he advanced? And I, his general,
Had given him orders, peremptory orders,
Not to desert his station! Stands it thus
With my authority? Is this the obedience
Due to my office, which being thrown aside,
No war can be conducted? Chieftains, speak!
You be the judges, generals! What deserves
That officer, who of his oath neglectful
Is guilty of contempt of orders?

ILLO.

Death.

WALLENSTEIN (*raising his voice, as all, but* ILLO, *had remained silent, and seemingly scrupulous*).

Count Piccolomini! what has he deserved?

MAX. PICCOLOMINI (*after a long pause*).

According to the letter of the law,
Death.

ISOLANI.

Death.

BUTLER.

Death, by the laws of war.

[QUESTENBERG *rises from his seat,* WALLENSTEIN *follows; all the rest rise.*

WALLENSTEIN.

To this the law condemns him, and not I.
And if I show him favour, 't will arise
From the reverence that I owe my Emperor.

QUESTENBERG.

If *so*, I can say nothing further—*here!*

WALLENSTEIN.

I accepted the command but on conditions:
And this the first, that to the diminution
Of my authority no human being,
Not even the Emperor's self, should be entitled
To do aught, or to say aught, with the army.
If I stand warranter of the *event*,

[1] The original is not translatable into English;

——Und sein Sold
Muss dem *Soldaten* werden, darnach heisst er.

It might perhaps have been thus rendered:

And that for which he sold his services,
The soldier must receive,

But a false or doubtful etymology is no more than a dull pun.

Placing my honour and my head in pledge,
Needs must I have full mastery in all
The means thereto. What render'd this Gustavus
Resistless, and unconquer'd upon earth?
This—that he was the monarch in his army!
A monarch, one who is indeed a monarch,
Was never yet subdued but by his equal.
But to the point! The best is yet to come.
Attend now, generals!

QUESTENBERG.

The Prince Cardinal
Begins his route at the approach of spring
From the Milanese; and leads a Spanish army
Through Germany into the Netherlands.
That he may march secure and unimpeded,
'T is the Emperor's will you grant him a detachment
Of eight horse-regiments from the army here.

WALLENSTEIN.

Yes, yes! I understand!—Eight regiments! Well,
Right well concerted, father Lamormain!
Eight thousand horse! Yes, yes! 'T is as it should be!
I see it coming.

QUESTENBERG.

There is nothing coming.
All stands in front: the counsel of state-prudence,
The dictate of necessity!——

WALLENSTEIN.

What then?
What, my Lord Envoy? May I not be suffer'd
To understand, that folks are tired of seeing
The sword's hilt in *my* grasp: and that your court
Snatch eagerly at this pretence, and use
The Spanish title, to drain off my forces,
To lead into the empire a new army
Unsubjected to my control? To throw me
Plumply aside,—I am still too powerful for you
To venture that. My stipulation runs,
That all the Imperial forces shall obey me
Where'er the German is the native language.
Of Spanish troops and of Prince Cardinals
That take their route, as visitors, through the empire,
There stands no syllable in my stipulation.
No syllable! And so the politic court
Steals in a tiptoe, and creeps round behind it;
First makes me weaker, then to be dispensed with,
Till it dares strike at length a bolder blow
And make short work with me.
What need of all these crooked ways, Lord Envoy!
Straight-forward, man! His compact with me pinches
The Emperor. He would that I moved off!—
Well!—I will gratify him!

[*Here there commences an agitation among the Generals, which increases continually.*

It grieves me for my noble officers' sakes!
I see not yet, by what means they will come at
The moneys they have advanced, or how obtain
The recompence their services demand.
Still a new leader brings new claimants forward,
And prior merit superannuates quickly.
There serve here many foreigners in the army,
And were the man in all else brave and gallant,
I was not wont to make nice scrutiny
After his pedigree or catechism.
This will be otherwise, i' the time to come.
Well—me no longer it concerns. [*He seats himself.*

MAX. PICCOLOMINI.

Forbid it Heaven, that it should come to this!
Our troops will swell in dreadful fermentation—
The Emperor is abused—it cannot be.

ISOLANI.

It cannot be; all goes to instant wreck.

WALLENSTEIN.

Thou hast said truly, faithful Isolani!
What *we* with toil and foresight have built up,
Will go to wreck—all go to instant wreck.
What then? another chieftain is soon found,
Another army likewise (who dares doubt it?)
Will flock from all sides to the Emperor,
At the first beat of his recruiting drum.

[*During this speech,* ISOLANI, TERTSKY, ILLO, *and* MARADAS *talk confusedly with great agitation.*

MAX. PICCOLOMINI (*busily and passionately going from one to another, and soothing them*).

Hear, my commander! Hear me, generals!
Let me conjure you, Duke! Determine nothing,
Till we have met and represented to you
Our joint remonstrances.—Nay, calmer! Friends!
I hope all may be yet set right again.

TERTSKY.

Away! let us away! in the antechamber
Find we the others. [*They go.*

BUTLER (*to* QUESTENBERG).

If good counsel gain
Due audience from your wisdom, my Lord Envoy!
You will be cautious how you show yourself
In public for some hours to come—or hardly
Will that gold key protect you from mal-treatment.

[*Commotions heard from without.*

WALLENSTEIN.

A salutary counsel——Thou, Octavio!
Wilt answer for the safety of our guest.
Farewell, Von Questenberg!

[QUESTENBERG *is about to speak.*

Nay, not a word.
Not one word more of that detested subject!
You have perform'd your duty—We know how
To separate the office from the man.

[*As* QUESTENBERG *is going off with* OCTAVIO; GOETZ, TIEFENBACH, KOLATTO, *press in; several other Generals following them.*

GOETZ.

Where 's he who means to rob us of our general?

TIEFENBACH (*at the same time*).

What are we forced to hear? That thou wilt leave us?

KOLATTO (*at the same time*).

We will live with thee, we will die with thee.

WALLENSTEIN (*with stateliness, and pointing to* ILLO).

There! the Field-Marshal knows our will. [*Exit.*

[*While all are going off the stage, the curtain drops.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.

SCENE—*A small Chamber.*

ILLO *and* TERTSKY.

TERTSKY.

Now for this evening's business! How intend you
To manage with the generals at the banquet?

ILLO.

Attend! We frame a formal declaration,
Wherein we to the Duke consign ourselves
Collectively, to be and to remain
His both with life and limb, and not to spare
The last drop of our blood for *him*, provided
So doing we infringe no oath or duty,
We may be under to the Emperor.—Mark!
This reservation we expressly make
In a particular clause, and save the conscience.
Now hear! This formula so framed and worded
Will be presented to them for perusal
Before the banquet. No one will find in it
Cause of offence or scruple. Hear now further!
After the feast, when now the vap'ring wine
Opens the heart, and shuts the eyes, we let
A counterfeited paper, in the which
This one particular clause has been left out,
Go round for signatures.

TERTSKY.

How? think you then
That they 'll believe themselves bound by an oath,
Which we had trick'd them into by a juggle?

ILLO.

We shall have caught and caged them! Let them then
Beat their wings bare against the wires, and rave
Loud as they may against our treachery;
At court their signatures will be believed
Far more than their most holy affirmations.
Traitors they are, and must be; therefore wisely
Will make a virtue of necessity.

TERTSKY.

Well, well, it shall content me; let but something
Be *done*, let only some decisive blow
Set us in motion.

ILLO.

Besides, 't is of subordinate importance
How, or how far, we may thereby propel
The generals. 'T is enough that we persuade
The Duke that they are his—Let him but act
In his determined mood, as if he had them,
And he *will* have them. Where he plunges in,
He makes a whirlpool, and all stream down to it.

TERTSKY.

His policy is such a labyrinth,
That many a time when I have thought myself
Close at his side, he 's gone at once, and left me
Ignorant of the ground where I was standing.
He lends the enemy his ear, permits me
To write to them, to Arnheim; to Sesina
Himself comes forward blank and undisguised;
Talks with us by the hour about his plans.
And when I think I have him—off at once——
He has slipp'd from me, and appears as if
He had no scheme, but to retain his place.

ILLO.

He give up his old plans! I 'll tell you, friend!
His soul is occupied with nothing else,
Even in his sleep—They are his thoughts, his dreams,
That day by day he questions for this purpose
The motions of the planets——

TERTSKY.

Ay! you know
This night, that is now coming, he with SENI
Shuts himself up in the astrological tower
To make joint observations—for I hear,
It is to be a night of weight and crisis;
And something great, and of long expectation,
Is to make its procession in the heaven.

ILLO.

Come! be we bold and make dispatch. The work
In this next day or two must thrive and grow
More than it has for years. And let but only
Things first turn up auspicious here below——
Mark what I say—the right stars too will show themselves.
Come, to the generals. All is in the glow,
And must be beaten while 't is malleable.

TERTSKY.

Do you go thither, Illo. I must stay
And *wait* here for the Countess Tertsky. Know,
That we too are not idle. Break one string,
A second is in readiness.

ILLO.

Yes! Yes!
I saw your lady smile with such sly meaning.
What 's in the wind?

TERTSKY.

A secret. Hush! she comes.

[*Exit* ILLO.

SCENE II.

(The COUNTESS *steps out from a Closet.)*

COUNT *and* COUNTESS TERTSKY.

TERTSKY.

Well—is she coming—I can keep him back
No longer.

COUNTESS.

She will be there instantly,
You only send him.

TERTSKY.

I am not quite certain
I must confess it, Countess, whether or not
We are earning the Duke's thanks hereby. You know,
No ray has broke out from him on this point.
You have o'er-ruled me, and yourself know best,
How far you dare proceed.

COUNTESS.

I take it on me.

[*Talking to herself, while she is advancing.*

Here 's no need of full powers and commissions—
My cloudy Duke! we understand each other—
And without words. What, could I not unriddle,
Wherefore the daughter should be sent for hither,
Why first *he*, and no other, should be chosen
To fetch her hither! This sham of betrothing her
To a bridegroom,[1] when no one knows—No! no!——
This may blind others! I see through thee, Brother!
But it beseems thee not, to draw a card
At such a game. Not yet!—It all remains
Mutely deliver'd up to my finessing——
Well—thou shalt not have been deceived, Duke Friedland!
In her who is thy sister.——

SERVANT *(enters).*

The commanders!

TERTSKY *(to the* COUNTESS).

Take care you heat his fancy and affections—

[1] In Germany, after honourable addresses have been paid and formally accepted, the lovers are called Bride and Bridegroom, even though the marriage should not take place till years afterwards.

Possess him with a reverie, and send him,
Absent and dreaming, to the banquet; that
He may not boggle at the signature.

COUNTESS.

Take you care of your guests!—Go, send him hither.

TERTSKY.

All rests upon his undersigning.

COUNTESS (*interrupting him*).

Go to your guests! Go——

ILLO (*comes back*).

Where art staying, Tertsky?
The house is full, and all expecting you.

TERTSKY.

Instantly! Instantly!

[*To the* COUNTESS.

And let him not
Stay here too long. It might awake suspicion
In the old man——

COUNTESS.

A truce with your precautions!

[*Exeunt* TERTSKY *and* ILLO.

SCENE III.

COUNTESS, MAX. PICCOLOMINI.

MAX. (*peeping in on the stage shily*).

Aunt Tertsky! may I venture?

[*Advances to the middle of the stage, and looks around him with uneasiness.*

She 's not here!
Where is she?

COUNTESS.

Look but somewhat narrowly
In yonder corner, lest perhaps she lie
Conceal'd behind that screen.

MAX.

There lie her gloves!

[*Snatches at them, but the* COUNTESS *takes them herself.*

You unkind Lady! You refuse me this—
You make it an amusement to torment me.

COUNTESS.

And this the thank you give me for my trouble?

MAX.

O, if you felt the oppression at *my* heart!
Since we 've been here, so to constrain myself—
With such poor stealth to hazard words and glances—
These, these are not my habits!

COUNTESS.

You have still
Many new habits to acquire, young friend!
But on this proof of your obedient temper
I must continue to insist; and only
On this condition can I play the agent
For your concerns.

MAX.

But wherefore comes she not?
Where is she?

COUNTESS.

Into *my* hands you must place it
Whole and entire. Whom could you find, indeed,
More zealously affected to your interest?
No soul on earth must know it—not your father.
He must not, above all.

MAX.

Alas! what danger?
Here is no face on which I might concentre
All the enraptured soul stirs up within me.
O Lady! tell me. Is all changed around me?
Or is it only I?
I find myself,
As among strangers! Not a trace is left
Of all my former wishes, former joys.
Where has it vanish'd to? There was a time
When even, methought, with such a world, as this,
I was not discontented. Now how flat!
How stale! No life, no bloom, no flavour in it!
My comrades are intolerable to me.
My father—Even to him I can say nothing.
My arms, my military duties—O!
They are such wearying toys!

COUNTESS.

But, gentle friend!
I must entreat it of your condescension,
You would be pleased to sink your eye, and favour
With one short glance or two this poor stale world,
Where even now much, and of much moment,
Is on the eve of its completion.

MAX.

Something,
I can't but know, is going forward round me.
I see it gathering, crowding, driving on,
In wild unaccustomary movements. Well,
In due time, doubtless, it will reach even me.
Where think you I have been, dear lady? Nay,
No raillery. The turmoil of the camp,
The spring-tide of acquaintance rolling in,
The pointless jest, the empty conversation,
Oppress'd and stiff'd me. I gasp'd for air—
I could not breathe—I was constrain'd to fly,
To seek a silence out for my full heart;
And a pure spot wherein to feel my happiness.
No smiling, Countess! In the church was I.
There is a cloister here to the heaven's gate, [1]
Thither I went, there found myself alone.
Over the altar hung a holy mother;
A wretched painting 't was, yet 't was the friend
That I was seeking in this moment. Ah,
How oft have I beheld that glorious form
In splendour, 'mid ecstatic worshippers;
Yet, still it moved me not! and now at once
Was my devotion cloudless as my love.

COUNTESS.

Enjoy your fortune and felicity!
Forget the world around you. Meantime, friendship
Shall keep strict vigils for you, anxious, active.
Only be manageable when that friendship
Points you the road to full accomplishment.
How long may it be since you declared your passion?

MAX.

This morning did I hazard the first word.

COUNTESS.

This morning the first time in twenty days?

MAX.

'T was at that hunting-castle, betwixt here
And Nepomuck, where *you* had join'd us, and—
That was the last relay of the whole journey!

[1] I am doubtful whether this be the dedication of the cloister or the name of one of the city gates, near which it stood. I have translated it in the former sense; but fear'ful of having made some blunder, I add the original.—Es ist ein Kloster hier *zur Himmelspforte*.

In a balcony we were standing mute,
And gazing out upon the dreary field:
Before us the dragoons were riding onward,
The safe-guard which the Duke had sent us—heavy
The inquietude of parting lay upon me,
And trembling ventured I at length these words:
This all reminds me, noble maiden, that
To-day I must take leave of my good fortune.
A few hours more, and you will find a father,
Will see yourself surrounded by new friends,
And I henceforth shall be but as a stranger,
Lost in the many—« Speak with my aunt Tertsky!»
With hurrying voice she interrupted me.
She falter'd. I beheld a glowing red
Possess her beautiful cheeks, and from the ground
Raised slowly up her eye met mine—no longer
Did I control myself.

[*The Princess* THEKLA *appears at the door, and remains standing, observed by the* COUNTESS, *but not by* PICCOLOMINI.

With instant boldness
I caught her in my arms, my mouth touch'd her's;
There was a rustling in the room close by;
It parted us—'T was you. What since has happen'd,
You know.

COUNTESS (*after a pause, with a stolen glance at* THEKLA).

And is it your excess of modesty;
Or are you so incurious, that you do not
Ask me too of my secret?

MAX.

Of *your* secret?

COUNTESS.

Why, yes! When in the instant after you
I stepp'd into the room, and found my niece there,
What she in this first moment of the heart
Ta'en with surprise—

MAX. (*with eagerness*).

Well?

SCENE IV.

THEKLA (*hurries forward*), COUNTESS, MAX. PICCOLOMINI.

THEKLA (*to the* COUNTESS).

Spare yourself the trouble:
That hears he better from myself.

MAX. (*stepping backward*).

My Princess!
What have you let her hear me say, aunt Tertsky?

THEKLA (*to the* COUNTESS).

Has he been here long?

COUNTESS.

Yes; and soon must go.
Where have *you* stay'd so long?

THEKLA.

Alas! my mother
Wept so again! and I—I see her suffer,
Yet cannot keep myself from being happy.

MAX.

Now once again I have courage to look on you.
To-day at noon I could not.
The dazzle of the jewels that play'd round you
Hid the beloved from me.

THEKLA.

Then you saw me
With your eye only—and not with your heart?

MAX.

This morning, when I found you in the circle
Of all your kindred, in your father's arms,
Beheld myself an alien in this circle,
O! what an impulse felt I in that moment
To fall upon his neck, to call him *father!*
But his stern eye o'erpower'd the swelling passion—
It dared not but be silent. And those brilliants,
That like a crown of stars enwreathed your brows,
They scared me too! O wherefore, wherefore should he
At the first meeting spread as 't were the ban
Of excommunication round you,—wherefore
Dress up the angel as for sacrifice,
And cast upon the light and joyous heart
The mournful burthen of *his* station? Fitly
May love dare woo for love; but such a splendour
Might none but monarchs venture to approach.

THEKLA.

Hush! not a word more of this mummery;
You see how soon the burthen is thrown off.

[*To the* COUNTESS.

He is not in spirits. Wherefore is he not?
'T is you, aunt, that have made him all so gloomy!
He had quite another nature on the journey—
So calm, so bright, so joyous eloquent.

[*To* MAX.

It was my wish to see you always so,
And never otherwise!

MAX.

You find yourself
In your great father's arms, beloved lady!
All in a new world, which does homage to you,
And which, were 't only by its novelty,
Delights your eye.

THEKLA.

Yes; I confess to you
That many things delight me here: this camp,
This motley stage of warriors, which renews
So manifold the image of my fancy,
And binds to life, binds to reality,
What hitherto had but been present to me
As a sweet dream!

MAX.

Alas! not so to me.
It makes a dream of my reality.
Upon some island in the ethereal heights
I 've lived for these last days. This mass of men
Forces me down to earth. It is a bridge
That, reconducting to my former life,
Divides me and my heaven.

THEKLA.

The game of life
Looks cheerful, when one carries in one's heart
The unalienable treasure. 'T is a game,
Which having once review'd, I turn more joyous
Back to my deeper and appropriate bliss.

[*Breaking off, and in a sportive tone.*

In this short time that I 've been present here,
What new unheard-of things have I not seen!
And yet they all must give place to the wonder
Which this mysterious castle guards.

COUNTESS (*recollecting*).

And what
Can this be then? Methought I was acquainted
With all the dusky corners of this house.

THEKLA (*smiling*).

Ay, but the road thereto is watch'd by spirits,
Two griffins still stand sentry at the door.

COUNTESS (*laughs*).

The astrological tower!—How happens it
That this same sanctuary, whose access
Is to all others so impracticable,
Opens before you even at your approach?

THEKLA.

A dwarfish old man with a friendly face
And snow-white hairs, whose gracious services
Were mine at first sight, open'd me the doors.

MAX.

That is the Duke's astrologer, old Seni.

THEKLA.

He question'd me on many points; for instance,
When I was born, what month, and on what day,
Whether by day or in the night.

COUNTESS.

He wish'd
To erect a figure for your horoscope.

THEKLA.

My hand too he examined, shook his head
With much sad meaning, and the lines, methought,
Did not square over truly with his wishes.

COUNTESS.

Well, Princess, and what found you in this tower?
My highest privilege has been to snatch
A side-glance, and away!

THEKLA.

It was a strange
Sensation that came o'er me, when at first
From the broad sunshine I stepp'd in; and now
The narrowing line of day-light, that ran after
The closing door, was gone; and all about me
'T was pale and dusky night, with many shadows
Fantastically cast. Here six or seven
Colossal statues, and all kings, stood round me
In a half-circle. Each one in his hand
A sceptre bore, and on his head a star;
And in the tower no other light was there
But from these stars: all seem'd to come from them.
« These are the planets,» said that low old man,
« They govern worldly fates, and for that cause
Are imaged here as kings. He farthest from you,
Spiteful, and cold, an old man melancholy,
With bent and yellow forehead, he is Saturn.
He opposite, the king with the red light,
An arm'd man for the battle, that is Mars:
And both these bring but little luck to man.»
But at his side a lovely lady stood,
The star upon her head was soft and bright,
On that was Venus, the bright star of joy.
And the left hand, lo! Mercury, with wings.
Quite in the middle glitter'd silver bright
A cheerful man, and with a monarch's mien;
And this was Jupiter, my father's star:
And at his side I saw the Sun and Moon.

MAX.

O never rudely will I blame his faith
In the might of stars and angels! 'T is not merely
The human being's Pride that peoples space
With life and mystical predominance;
Since likewise for the stricken heart of Love
This visible nature, and this common world,
Is all too narrow: yea, a deeper import
Lurks in the legend told my infant years
Than lies upon that truth, we live to learn.
For fable is Love's world, his home, his birth-place:
Delightedly dwells he 'mong fays and talismans,
And spirits; and delightedly believes
Divinities, being himself divine.
The intelligible forms of ancient poets,
The fair humanities of old religion,
The Power, the Beauty, and the Majesty,
That had her haunts in dale, or piny mountain,
Or forest by slow stream, or pebbly spring,
Or chasms and wat'ry depths; all these have vanish'd.
They live no longer in the faith of reason!
But still the heart doth need a language, still
Doth the old instinct bring back the old names,
And to yon starry world they now are gone,
Spirits or gods, that used to share this earth
With man as with their friend;[1] and to the lover
Yonder they move, from yonder visible sky
Shoot influence down: and even at this day
'T is Jupiter who brings whate'er is great,
And Venus who brings every thing that 's fair!

THEKLA.

And if this be the science of the stars,
I too, with glad and zealous industry,
Will learn acquaintance with this cheerful faith.
It is a gentle and affectionate thought,
That in immeasurable heights above us,
At our first birth, the wreath of love was woven,
With sparkling stars for flowers.

COUNTESS.

Not only roses,
But thorns too hath the heaven; and well for you
Leave they your wreath of love inviolate:
What Venus twined, the bearer of glad fortune,
The sullen orb of Mars soon tears to pieces.

MAX.

Soon will his gloomy empire reach its close.
Blest be the General's zeal: into the laurel
Will he inweave the olive-branch, presenting
Peace to the shouting nations. Then no wish
Will have remain'd for his great heart! Enough
Has he perform'd for glory, and can now
Live for himself and his. To his domains
Will he retire; he has a stately seat
Of fairest view at Gitschin; Reichenberg,
And Friedland Castle, both lie pleasantly—
Even to the foot of the huge mountains here
Stretches the chase and covers of his forests:
His ruling passion, to create the splendid,
He can indulge without restraint; can give
A princely patronage to every art,
And to all worth a Sovereign's protection.
Can build, can plant, can watch the starry courses—

COUNTESS.

Yet I would have you look, and look again,
Before you lay aside your arms, young friend!
A gentle bride, as she is, is well worth it,
That you should woo and win her with the sword.

MAX.

O, that the sword could win her!

COUNTESS.

What was that?

[1] No more of talk, where god or angel guest
With man, as with his friend familiar, used
To sit indulgent. *Paradise Lost*, B. IX.

Did you hear nothing? Seem'd, as if I heard
Tumult and larum in the banquet-room.

[*Exit* COUNTESS.

SCENE V.

THEKLA *and* MAX. PICCOLOMINI.

THEKLA (*as soon as the* COUNTESS *is out of sight, in a quick low voice to* PICCOLOMINI).
Don't trust them! They are false!

MAX.
Impossible!

THEKLA.
Trust no one here but me. I saw at once,
They had a *purpose*.

MAX.
Purpose! but what purpose?
And how can we be instrumental to it?

THEKLA.
I know no more than you; but yet believe me:
There 's some design in this! to make us happy,
To realize our union—trust me, love!
They but pretend to wish it.

MAX.
But these Tertskys——
Why use we them at all? Why not your mother?
Excellent creature! she deserves from us
A full and filial confidence.

THEKLA.
She doth love you,
Doth rate you high before all others—but—
But such a secret—she would never have
The courage to conceal it from my father.
For her own peace of mind we must preserve it
A secret from her too.

MAX.
Why any secret?
I love not secrets. Mark, what I will do.
I 'll throw me at your father's feet—let *him*
Decide upon my fortunes!—He is true,
He wears no mask—he hates all crooked ways—
He is so good, so noble!

THEKLA (*falls on his neck*).
That are you!

MAX.
You knew him only since this morn; but I
Have lived ten years already in his presence.
And who knows whether in this very moment
He is not merely waiting for us both
To own our loves, in order to unite us?
You are silent?——
You look at me with such a hopelessness!
What have you to object against your father?

THEKLA.
I? Nothing. Only he 's so occupied—
He has no leisure time to think about
The happiness of us two. [*Taking his hand tenderly.*
Follow me!
Let us not place too great a faith in men.
These Tertskys—we will still be grateful to them
For every kindness, but not trust them further
Than they deserve;—and in all else rely——
On our own hearts!

MAX.
O! shall we *e'er* be happy?

THEKLA.
Are we not happy now? Art thou not mine?
Am I not thine? There lives within my soul
A lofty courage—'t is love gives it me!
I ought to be less open—ought to hide
My heart more from thee—so decorum dictates:
But where in this place couldst thou seek for truth,
If in my mouth thou didst not find it?

SCENE VI.

To them enters the Countess TERTSKY.

COUNTESS (*in a pressing manner*).
Come!
My husband sends me for you—It is now
The latest moment.
[*They not appearing to attend to what she says, she steps between them.*
Part you!

THEKLA.
O, not yet!
It has been scarce a moment.

COUNTESS.
Aye! Then time
Flies swiftly with your Highness, Princess niece!

MAX.
There is no hurry, aunt.

COUNTESS.
Away! away!
The folks begin to miss you. Twice already
His father has ask'd for him.

THEKLA.
Ha! his father!

COUNTESS.
You understand *that*, niece!

THEKLA.
Why needs he
To go at all to that society?
'T is not his proper company. They may
Be worthy men, but he 's too young for them.
In brief, he suits not such society.

COUNTESS.
You mean, you 'd rather keep him wholly here?

THEKLA (*with energy*).
Yes! you have hit it, aunt! That is my meaning.
Leave him here wholly! Tell the company—

COUNTESS.
What? have you lost your senses, niece?—
Count, you remember the conditions. Come!

MAX. (*to* THEKLA).
Lady, I must obey, Farewell, dear lady!
[THEKLA *turns away from him with a quick motion.*
What say you then, dear lady?

THEKLA (*without looking at him*).
Nothing. Go!

MAX.
Can I, when you are angry——
[*He draws up to her, their eyes meet, she stands silent a moment, then throws herself into his arms; he presses her fast to his heart.*

COUNTESS.
Off! Heavens! if any one should come!
Hark! What 's that noise! It comes this way.——Off!
MAX. *tears himself away out of her arms, and goes.*
The COUNTESS *accompanies him.* THEKLA *fol-*

lows him with her eyes at first, walks restlessly across the room, then stops, and remains standing, lost in thought. A guitar lies on the table, she seizes it as by a sudden emotion, and after she has played a while an irregular and melancholy symphony, she falls gradually into the music and sings.

THEKLA (*plays and sings*).

The cloud doth gather, the greenwood roar,
The damsel paces along the shore;
The billows they tumble with might, with might;
And she flings out her voice to the darksome night;
Her bosom is swelling with sorrow;
The world it is empty, the heart will die,
There's nothing to wish for beneath the sky:
Thou Holy One, call thy child away!
I've lived and loved, and that was to-day—
Make ready my grave-clothes to-morrow. [1]

SCENE VII.

COUNTESS (*returns*), THEKLA.

COUNTESS.

Fie, lady niece! to throw yourself upon him,
Like a poor gift to one who cares not for it,
And so must be flung after him! For you,
Duke Friedland's only child, I should have thought,
It had been more beseeming to have shown yourself
More chary of your person.

THEKLA (*rising*).

And what mean you?

[1] I found it not in my power to translate this song with *literal* fidelity, preserving at the same time the Alcaic Movement; and have therefore added the original with a prose translation. Some of my readers may be more fortunate.

THEKLA (*spielt und singt*).

Der Eichwald brauset, die Wolken ziehn,
Das Mægdlein wandelt an Ufers Grün,
Es bricht sich die Welle mit Macht, mit Macht,
Und sie singt hinaus in die finstre Nacht,
Das Auge von Weinen getrübet:
Das Herz ist gestorben, die Welt ist leer,
Und weiter giebt sie dem Wunsche nichts mehr.
Du Heilige, rufe dein Kind zurück,
Ich habe genossen das irdische Glück,
Ich habe gelebt und geliebet.

LITERAL TRANSLATION.

THEKLA (*plays and sings*).

The oak-forest bellows, the clouds gather, the damsel walks to and fro on the green of the shore; the wave breaks with might, with might, and she sings out into the dark night, her eye discoloured with weeping: the heart is dead, the world is empty, and further gives it nothing more to the wish. Thou Holy One, call thy child home. I have enjoyed the happiness of this world, I have lived and have loved.

I cannot but add here an imitation of this song, with which the author of «The Tale of Rosamund Gray and Blind Margaret» has favoured me, and which appears to me to have caught the happiest manner of our old ballads.

The clouds are blackening, the storms threat'ning,
The cavern doth mutter, the greenwood moan;
Billows are breaking, the damsel's heart aching,
Thus in the dark night she singeth alone,
Her eye upward roving:
The world is empty, the heart is dead surely,
In this world plainly all seemeth amiss;
To thy heaven, Holy One, take home thy little one,
I have partaken of all earth's bliss,
Both living and loving.

COUNTESS.

I mean, niece, that you should not have forgotten
Who *you* are, and who he is. But perchance
That never once occurr'd to you.

THEKLA.

What then?

COUNTESS.

That you're the daughter of the Prince Duke Friedland.

THEKLA.

Well—and what farther?

COUNTESS.

What? a pretty question!

THEKLA.

He was *born* that which we have but *become*.
He's of an ancient Lombard family,
Son of a reigning princess.

COUNTESS.

Are you dreaming?
Talking in sleep? An excellent jest, forsooth!
We shall no doubt right courteously *entreat* him
To honour with his hand the richest heiress
In Europe.

THEKLA.

That will not be necessary.

COUNTESS.

Methinks 't were well though not to run the hazard.

THEKLA.

His father loves him; Count Octavio
Will interpose no difficulty——

COUNTESS.

His!
His father! *his!* But yours niece, what of yours?

THEKLA.

Why I begin to think you fear his father.
So anxiously you hide it from the man!
His father, *his*, I mean.

COUNTESS (*looks at her as scrutinizing*).

Niece, you are *false*.

THEKLA.

Are you then wounded? O, be friends with me!

COUNTESS.

You hold your game for won already. Do not
Triumph too soon!—

THEKLA (*interrupting her, and attempting to soothe her.*)

Nay now, be friends with me.

COUNTESS.

It is not yet so far gone.

THEKLA.

I believe you.

COUNTESS.

Did you suppose your father had laid out
His most important life in toils of war,
Denied himself each quiet earthly bliss,
Had banish'd slumber from his tent, devoted
His noble head to care, and for this only,
To make a happier pair of you? At length
To draw you from your convent, and conduct
In easy triumph to your arms the man
That chanced to please your eyes! All this, methinks,
He might have purchased at a cheaper rate.

THEKLA.

That which he did not plant for me might yet
Bear me fair fruitage of its own accord.
And if my friendly and affectionate fate,

Out of his fearful and enormous being,
Will but prepare the joys of life for me—

COUNTESS.

Thou seest it with a lovelorn maiden's eyes.
Cast thine eye round, bethink thee who thou art.
Into no house of joyance hast thou stepp'd,
For no espousals dost thou find the walls
Deck'd out, no guests the nuptial garland wearing.
Here is no splendour but of arms. Or think'st thou
That all these thousands are here congregated
To lead up the long dances at thy wedding!
Thou see'st thy father's forehead full of thought,
Thy mother's eye in tears: upon the balance
Lies the great destiny of all our house.
Leave now the puny wish, the girlish feeling,
O thrust it far behind thee! Give thou proof,
Thou 'rt the daughter of the Mighty—*his*
Who where he moves creates the wonderful.
Not to herself the woman must belong,
Annex'd and bound to alien destinies.
But she performs the best part, she the wisest,
Who can transmute the alien into self,
Meet and disarm necessity by choice;
And what must be, take freely to her heart,
And bear and foster it with mother's love.

THEKLA.

Such ever was my lesson in the convent.
I had no loves, no wishes, knew myself
Only as his—his daughter—his, the Mighty!
His fame, the echo of whose blast drove to me
From the far distance, waken'd in my soul
No other thought than this—I am appointed
To offer up myself in passiveness to him.

COUNTESS.

That *is* thy fate. Mould thou thy wishes to it.
I and thy mother gave thee the example.

THEKLA.

My fate hath shown me *him*, to whom behoves it
That I should offer up myself. In gladness
Him will I follow.

COUNTESS.

Not thy fate hath shown him!
Thy heart, say rather—'t was thy heart, my child!

THEKLA.

Fate hath no voice but the heart's impulses.
I am all his! *His* present—*his* alone,
Is this new life, which lives in me? He hath
A right to his own creature. What was I
Ere his fair love infused a soul into me?

COUNTESS.

Thou wouldst oppose thy father then, should he
Have otherwise determined with thy person?

[THEKLA *remains silent. The* COUNTESS *continues.*

Thou mean'st to force him to thy liking?—Child,
His name is Friedland.

THEKLA.

My name too is Friedland.
He shall have found a genuine daughter in me.

COUNTESS.

What? he has vanquish'd all impediment,
And in the wilful mood of his own daughter
Shall a new struggle rise for him? Child! child!
As yet thou hast seen thy father's smiles alone;
The eye of his rage thou hast not seen. Dear child,
I will not frighten thee. To that extreme,
I trust, it ne'er shall come. His will is yet
Unknown to me: 't is possible his aims
May have the same direction as thy wish.
But this can never, never be his will
That thou, the daughter of his haughty fortunes,
Should'st e'er demean thee as a love-sick maiden;
And like some poor cost-nothing, fling thyself
Toward the man, who, *if* that high prize ever
Be destined to await him, yet, with sacrifices
The highest love can bring, must pay for it.

[*Exit* COUNTESS.

THEKLA (*who during the last speech had been standing evidently lost in her reflections*).

I thank thee for the hint. It turns
My sad presentiment to certainty.
And it is so!—Not one friend have we here,
Not one true heart! we 've nothing but ourselves!
O she said rightly—no auspicious signs
Beam on this covenant of our affections.
This is no theatre, where hope abides:
The dull thick noise of war alone stirs here;
And love himself, as he were arm'd in steel,
Steps forth, and girds him for the strife of death.

[*Music from the banquet-room is heard.*

There 's a dark spirit walking in our house,
And swiftly will the Destiny close on us.
It drove me hither from my calm asylum,
It mocks my soul with charming witchery,
It lures me forward in a seraph's shape;
I see it near, I see it nearer floating,
It draws it pulls me with a god-like power—
And lo! the abyss—and thither am I moving—
I have no power within me not to move!

[*The music from the banquet-room becomes louder.*

O when a house is doom'd in fire to perish,
Many and dark heaven drives his clouds together,
Yea, shoots his lightnings down from sunny heights,
Flames burst from out the subterraneous chasms,
[1]And fiends and angels mingling in their fury,
Sling fire-brands at the burning edifice.

[*Exit* THEKLA.

SCENE VIII.

A large Saloon lighted up with festal Splendour; in the midst of it, and in the Centre of the Stage, a Table richly set out, at which eight Generals are sitting, among whom are OCTAVIO PICCOLOMINI, TERTSKY, *and* MARADAS. *Right and left of this, but farther back, two other Tables, at each of which six Persons are placed. The Middle Door, which is standing open, gives to the Prospect a fourth Table, with the same Number of Persons. More forward stands the Sideboard. The whole front of the Stage is kept open for the Pages and Servants in waiting. All is in motion. The Band of Music belonging to* TERTSKY'S *Regiment march across the Stage, and draw up round the Tables. Before they are quite off from the Front of the Stage,* MAX. PICCOLOMINI *appears,* TERTSKY *advances towards him with a*

[1] There are few, who will not have taste enough to laugh at the two concluding lines of this soliloquy; and still fewer, I would fain hope, who would not have been more disposed to shudder, had I given a *faithful* translation. For the readers of German I have added the original:

Blind-wüthend schleudert selbst der Gott der Freude
Den Pechkranz in das brennende Gebäude.

Paper, ISOLANI *comes up to meet him with a Beaker or Service-cup.*

TERTSKY, ISOLANI, MAX. PICCOLOMINI.

ISOLANI.

Here brother, what we love! Why, where hast been?
Off to thy place—quick! Tertsky here has given
The mother's holiday wine up to free booty.
Here it goes on as at the Heidelberg castle.
Already hast thou lost the best. They 're giving
At yonder table ducal crowns in shares;
There 's Sternberg's lands and chattels are put up,
With Eggenberg's, Stawata's, Lichtenstein's,
And all the great Bohemian feodalities.
Be nimble, lad! and something may turn up
For thee—who knows? off—to thy place! quick! march!

TIEFENBACH *and* GOETZ (*call out from the second and third tables*).

Count Piccolomini!

TERTSKY.

Stop, ye shall have him in an instant.—Read
This oath here, whether as 't is here set forth,
The wording satisfies you. They 've all read it,
Each in his turn, and each one will subscribe
His individual signature.

MAX. (*reads*).

« Ingratis servire nefas. »

ISOLANI.

That sounds to my ears very much like Latin,
And being interpreted, pray what may 't mean?

TERTSKY.

No honest man will serve a thankless master.

MAX.

« Inasmuch as our supreme Commander, the illustrious Duke of Friedland, in consequence of the manifold affronts and grievances which he has received, had expressed his determination to quit the Emperor, but on our unanimous entreaty has graciously consented to remain still with the army, and not to part from us without our approbation thereof, so we, collectively and *each in particular*, in the stead of an oath personally taken, do hereby oblige ourselves—likewise by him honourably and faithfully to hold, and in nowise whatsoever from him to part, and to be ready to shed for his interests the last drop of our blood, so far, namely, as *our oath to the Emperor will permit it.* (*These last words are repeated by* ISOLANI.) In testimony of which we subscribe our names. »

TERTSKY.

Now!—are you willing to subscribe this paper?

ISOLANI.

Why should he not? All officers of honour
Can do it, aye must do it.—Pen and ink here!

TERTSKY.

Nay, let it rest till after meal.

ISOLANI (*drawing* MAX. *along*).

Come, Max.

[*Both seat themselves at their table.*

SCENE IX.

TERTSKY, NEUMANN.

TERTSKY (*beckons to* NEUMANN *who is waiting at the side-table, and steps forward with him to the edge of the stage*).

Have you the copy with you, Neumann? Give it.
It may be changed for the other?

NEUMANN.

I have copied it
Letter by letter, line by line; no eye
Would e'er discover other difference,
Save only the omission of that clause,
According to your Excellency's order.

TERTSKY.

Right! lay it yonder, and away with this—
It has perform'd its business—to the fire with it—

[NEUMANN *lays the copy on the table, and steps back again to the side-table.*

SCENE X.

ILLO (*comes out from the second chamber*), TERTSKY.

ILLO.

How goes it with young Piccolomini!

TERTSKY.

All right, I think. He has started no objection.

ILLO.

He is the only one I fear about—
He and his father. Have an eye on both!

TERTSKY.

How looks it at your table: you forget not
To keep them warm and stirring?

ILLO.

O, quite cordial,
They are quite cordial in the scheme. We have them.
And 't is as I predicted too. Already
It is the talk, not merely to maintain
The Duke in station. « Since we 're once for all
Together and unanimous, why not, »
Says Montecuculi, « ay, why not onward,
And make conditions with the Emperor
There in his own Vienna? » Trust me, Count,
Were it not for these said Piccolomini,
We might have spared ourselves the cheat.

TERTSKY.

And Butler?
How goes it there? Hush!

SCENE XI.

To them enter BUTLER *from the second table.*

BUTLER.

Don't disturb yourselves.
Field Marshal, I have understood you perfectly.
Good luck be to the scheme; and as to me,
[*With an air of mystery.*
You may depend upon me.

ILLO (*with vivacity*).

May we, Butler?

BUTLER.

With or without the clause, all one to me?
You understand me? My fidelity
The Duke may put to any proof—I 'm with him!
Tell him so! I 'm the Emperor's officer,

As long as 't is his pleasure to remain
The Emperor's general! and Friedland's servant,
As soon as it shall please him to become
His own lord.

TERTSKY.

You would make a good exchange.
No stern economist, no Ferdinand,
Is he to whom you plight your services.

BUTLER (*with a haughty look*).

I do not put up my fidelity
To sale, Count Tertsky! Half a year ago
I would not have advised you to have made me
An overture to that, to which I now
Offer myself of my own free accord.—
But that is past! and to the Duke, Field Marshal,
I bring myself together with my regiment.
And mark you, 't is my humour to believe,
The example which I give will not remain
Without an influence.

ILLO.

Who is ignorant,
That the whole army look to Colonel Butler,
As to a light that moves before them?

BUTLER.

Ey?
Then I repent me not of that fidelity
Which for the length of forty years I held,
If in my sixtieth year my old good name
Can purchase for me a revenge so full.
Start not at what I say, sir Generals!
My real motives—they concern not you.
And you yourselves, I trust, could not expect
That this your game had crook'd *my* judgment—or
That fickleness, quick blood, or such like cause,
Has driven the old man from the track of honour,
Which he so long had trodden.—Come, my friends!
I 'm not thereto determined with less firmness,
Because I know and have look'd steadily
At that on which I have determined.

ILLO.

Say,
And speak roundly, what are we to deem you?

BUTLER.

A friend! I give you here my hand! I 'm your's
With all I have. Not only men, but money
Will the Duke want.—Go, tell him, sirs!
I 've earn'd and laid up somewhat in his service,
I lend it him; and is he my survivor,
It has been already long ago bequeath'd him.
He is my heir. For me, I stand alone
Here in the world; nought know I of the feeling
That binds the husband to a wife and children.
My name dies with me, my existence ends.

ILLO.

'T is not your money that he needs—a heart
Like yours weighs tons of gold down, weighs down millions!

BUTLER.

I came a simple soldier's boy from Ireland
To Prague—and with a master, whom I buried.
From lowest stable duty I climb'd up,
Such was the fate of war, to this high rank,
The plaything of a whimsical good fortune.
And Wallenstein too is a child of luck;
I love a fortune that is like my own.

ILLO.

All powerful souls have kindred with each other.

BUTLER.

This is an awful moment! to the brave,
To the determined, an auspicious moment.
The Prince of Weimar arms, upon the Maine
To found a mighty dukedom. He of Halberstadt,
That Mansfeld, wanted but a longer life
To have mark'd out with his good sword a lordship
That should reward his courage. Who of these
Equals our Friedland? there is nothing, nothing
So high, but he may set the ladder to it!

TERTSKY.

That 's spoken like a man!

BUTLER.

Do you secure the Spaniard and Italian—
I 'll be your warrant for the Scotchman Lesly.
Come, to the company!

TERTSKY.

Where is the master of the cellar? Ho!
Let the best wines come up. Ho! cheerly, boy!
Luck comes to-day, so give her hearty welcome.

[*Exeunt, each to his table.*

SCENE XII.

The MASTER OF THE CELLAR *advancing with* NEUMANN, *Servants passing backwards and forwards.*

MASTER OF THE CELLAR.

The best wine! O: if my old mistress, his lady mother, could but see these wild goings on, she would turn herself round in her grave. Yes, yes, sir officer! 't is all down the hill with this noble house! no end, no moderation! And this marriage with the Duke's sister, a splendid connection, a very splendid connection! but I will tell you, sir officer, it looks no good.

NEUMANN.

Heaven forbid! Why, at this very moment the whole prospect is in bud and blossom!

MASTER OF THE CELLAR.

You think so?—Well, well! much may be said on that head.

FIRST SERVANT (*comes*).

Burgundy for the fourth table.

MASTER OF THE CELLAR.

Now, sir lieutenant, if this an't the seventieth flask—

FIRST SERVANT.

Why, the reason is, that German lord, Tiefenbach sits at that table.

MASTER OF THE CELLAR (*continuing his discourse to* NEUMANN).

They are soaring too high. They would rival kings and electors in their pomp and splendour; and wherever the Duke leaps, not a minute does my gracious master, the count, loiter on the brink——(*to the Servants.*)—What do you stand there listening for? I will let you know you have legs presently. Off! see to the tables, see to the flasks! Look there! Count Palfi has an empty glass before him!

RUNNER (*comes*).

The great service-cup is wanted, sir; that rich gold cup with the Bohemian arms on it. The Count says you know which it is.

MASTER OF THE CELLAR.

Ay! that was made for Frederick's coronation by the

artist William—there was not such another prize in the whole booty at Prague.

RUNNER.

The same!—a health is to go round in him.

MASTER OF THE CELLAR (*shaking his head while he fetches and rinses the cups*).

This will be something for the tale-bearers—this goes to Vienna.

NEUMANN.

Permit me to look at it.—Well, this is a cup indeed! How heavy! as well it may be, being all gold.—And what neat things are embossed on it! how natural and elegant they look!—There, on that first quarter, let me see. That proud Amazon there on horseback, she that is taking a leap over the crosier and mitres, and carries on a wand a hat together with a banner, on which there 's a goblet represented. Can you tell me what all this signifies?

MASTER OF THE CELLAR.

The woman whom you see there on horseback, is the Free Election of the Bohemian Crown. That is signified by the round hat, and by that fiery steed on which she is riding. The hat is the pride of man; for he who cannot keep his hat on before kings and emperors is no free man.

NEUMANN.

But what is the cup there on the banner?

MASTER OF THE CELLAR.

The cup signifies the freedom of the Bohemian Church, as it was in our forefathers' times. Our forefathers in the wars of the Hussites forced from the Pope this noble privilege: for the Pope, you know, will not grant the cup to any layman. Your true Moravian values nothing beyond the cup; it is his costly jewel, and has cost the Bohemians their precious blood in many and many a battle.

NEUMANN.

And what says that chart that hangs in the air there, over it all?

MASTER OF THE CELLAR.

That signifies the Bohemian letter-royal, which we forced from the Emperor Rudolph—a precious, never to be enough valued parchment, that secures to the new Church the old privileges of free ringing and open psalmody. But since he of Steiermark has ruled over us, that is at an end; and after the battle at Prague, in which Count Palatine Frederick lost crown and empire, our faith hangs upon the pulpit and the altar—and our brethren look at their homes over their shoulders; but the letter-royal the Emperor himself cut to pieces with his scissars.

NEUMANN.

Why, my good Master of the Cellar! you are deep read in the chronicles of your country?

MASTER OF THE CELLAR.

So were my forefathers, and for that reason were the minstrels, and served under Procopius and Ziska. Peace be with their ashes! Well, well! they fought for a good cause though—There! carry it up!

NEUMANN.

Stay! let me but look at this second quarter. Look *there!* That is, when at Prague Castle the Imperial Counsellors, Martinitz and Stawata were hurled down head over heels. 'T is even so! there stands Count Thur who commands it.

[*Runner takes the service-cup and goes off with it.*

MASTER OF THE CELLAR.

O let me never more hear of that day. It was the three-and-twentieth of May, in the year of our Lord one thousand, six hundred, and eighteen. It seems to me as it were but yesterday—from that unlucky day it all began, all the heart-aches of the country. Since that day it is now sixteen years, and there has never once been peace on the earth.

[*Health drank aloud at the second table.*

The Prince of Weimar! Hurra!

[*At the third and fourth table.*

Long live Prince William! Long live Duke Bernard! Hurra!

[*Music strikes up.*

FIRST SERVANT.

Hear 'em! Hear 'em! What an uproar!

SECOND SERVANT (*comes in running*).

Did you hear? They have drank the Prince of Weimar's health.

THIRD SERVANT.

The Swedish Chief Commander!

FIRST SERVANT (*speaking at the same time*).

The Lutheran!

SECOND SERVANT.

Just before, when Count Deodate gave out the Emperor's health, they were all as mum as a nibbling mouse.

MASTER OF THE CELLAR.

Po, po! When the wine goes in, strange things come out. A good servant hears, and hears not!—You should be nothing but eyes and feet, except when you are called to.

SECOND SERVANT.

[*To the Runner, to whom he gives secretly a flask of wine, keeping his eye on the Master of the Cellar, standing between him and the Runner.*

Quick, Thomas! before the Master of the Cellar runs this way—'t is a flask of Frontignac?—Snapped it up at the third table—Canst go off with it?

RUNNER (*hides it in his pocket*).

All right!

[*Exit the Second Servant.*

THIRD SERVANT (*aside to the First*).

Be on the hark, Jack! that we may have right plenty to tell to father Quivoga—He will give us right plenty of absolution in return for it.

FIRST SERVANT.

For that very purpose I am always having something to do behind Illo's chair.—He is the man for speeches to make you stare with!

MASTER OF THE CELLAR (*to* NEUMANN).

Who, pray, may that swarthy man be, he with the cross, that is chatting so confidentially with Esterhats?

NEUMANN.

Ay! he too is one of those to whom they confide too much. He calls himself Maradas, a Spaniard is he.

MASTER OF THE CELLAR (*impatiently*).

Spaniard! Spaniard!—I tell you, friend, nothing good comes of those Spaniards. All these out-landish fellows[1] are little better than rogues.

[1] There is a humour in the original which cannot be given in the translation. «Die *Welschen* alle,» etc. which word in classical German means the *Italians* alone; but in its first sense, and at present in the *vulgar* use of the word, signifies foreigners in general. Our word wall-nuts, I suppose, means *outlandish* nuts—Wallæ nuces, in German «Welsche Nüsse.» T.

NEUMANN.

Fy, fy! you should not say so, friend. There are among them our very best generals, and those on whom the Duke at this moment relies the most.

MASTER OF THE CELLAR.

[*Taking the flask out of the Runner's pocket.* My son, it will be broken to pieces in your pocket.

[TERTSKY *hurries in, fetches away the paper and calls to a Servant for Pen and Ink, and goes to the back of the Stage.*

MASTER OF THE CELLAR *(to the Servants).*

The Lieutenant-General stands up.—Be on the watch.—Now! They break up.—Off, and move back the forms.

[*They rise at all the tables, the Servants hurry off the front of the Stage to the Tables; part of the guests come forward.*

SCENE XIII.

OCTAVIO PICCOLOMINI *enters in conversation with* MARADAS, *and both place themselves quite on the edge of the Stage on one side of the Proscenium. On the side directly opposite,* MAX. PICCOLOMINI, *by himself, lost in thought, and taking no part in any thing that is going forward. The middle space between both, but rather more distant from the edge of the Stage, is filled up by* BUTLER, ISOLANI, GOETZ, TIEFENBACH, *and* KOLATTO.

ISOLANI *(while the Company is coming forward).*

Good night, good night, Kolatto! Good night, Lieutenant-General!—I should rather say, good morning.

GOETZ *(to* TIEFENBACH).

Noble brother! *(making the usual compliment after meals.)*

TIEFENBACH.

Ay! 't was a royal feast indeed.

GOETZ.

Yes, my Lady Countess understands these matters. Her mother-in-law, Heaven rest her soul, taught her! —Ah! that was a housewife for you!

TIEFENBACH.

There was not her like in all Bohemia for setting out a table.

OCTAVIO *(aside to* MARADAS).

Do me the favour to talk to me—talk of what you will—or of nothing. Only preserve the appearance at least of talking. I would not wish to stand by myself, and yet I conjecture that there will be goings on here worthy of our attentive observation. *(He continues to fix his eye on the whole following scene.)*

ISOLANI *(on the point of going).*

Lights! lights!

TERTSKY *(advances with the Paper to* ISOLANI).

Noble brother; two minutes longer!—Here is something to subscribe.

ISOLANI.

Subscribe as much as you like—but you must excuse me from reading it.

TERTSKY.

There is no need. It is the oath which you have already read.—Only a few marks of your pen!

[ISOLANI *hands over the Paper to* OCTAVIO *respectfully.*

TERTSKY.

Nay, nay, first come first served. There is no precedence here. (OCTAVIO *runs over the Paper with apparent indifference.* TERTSKY *watches him at some distance).*

GOETZ *(to* TERTSKY).

Noble Count! with your permission—Good night.

TERTSKY.

Where 's the hurry? Come, one other composing draught. *(To the Servants)*—Ho?

GOETZ.

Excuse me—an't able.

TERTSKY.

A thimble-full!

GOETZ.

Excuse me.

TIEFENBACH *(sits down).*

Pardon me, nobles!—This standing does not agree with me.

TERTSKY.

Consult only your own convenience, General!

TIEFENBACH.

Clear at head, sound in stomach—only my legs won't carry me any longer.

ISOLANI *(pointing at his corpulence).*

Poor legs! how *should* they! Such an unmerciful load! (OCTAVIO *subscribes his name, and reaches over the Paper to* TERTSKY, *who gives it to* ISOLANI; *and he goes to the table to sign his name.)*

TIEFENBACH.

'T was that war in Pomerania that first brought it on. Out in all weathers—ice and snow—no help for it.—I shall never get the better of it all the days of my life.

GOETZ.

Why, in simple verity, your Swede makes no nice inquiries about the season.

TERTSKY *(observing* ISOLANI, *whose hand trembles excessively, so that he can scarce direct his pen).* Have you had that ugly complaint long, noble brother?—Dispatch it.

ISOLANI.

The sins of youth! I have already tried the chalybeate waters. Well—I must bear it.

[TERTSKY *gives the Paper to* MARADAS; *he steps to the table to subscribe.*

OCTAVIO (*advancing to* BUTLER).

You are not over fond of the orgies of Bacchus, Colonel! I have observed it. You would, I think, find yourself more to your liking in the uproar of a battle, than of a feast.

BUTLER.

I must confess, 't is not in my way.

OCTAVIO (*stepping nearer to him friendlily*).

Nor in mine either, I can assure you; and I am not a little glad, my much-honoured Colonel Butler, that we agree so well in our opinions. A half dozen good friends at most, at a small round table, a glass of genuine Tokay, open hearts, and a rational conversation—that 's my taste!

BUTLER.

And mine too, when it can be had.

[*The paper comes to* TIEFENBACH, *who glances over it at the same time with* GOETZ *and* KOLATTO. MARADAS *in the mean time returns to* OCTAVIO. *All this takes place, the conversation with* BUTLER *proceeding uninterrupted.*

OCTAVIO (*introducing* MARADAS *to* BUTLER).

Don Balthasar Maradas! likewise a man of our stamp, and long ago your admirer. [BUTLER *bows.*

OCTAVIO (*continuing*).

You are a stranger here—'t was but yesterday you arrived—you are ignorant of the ways and means here. 'T is a wretched place—I know, at our age, one loves to be snug and quiet—What if you moved your lodgings? —Come, be my visitor. (BUTLER *makes a low bow*). Nay, without compliment!—For a friend like you, I have still a corner remaining.

BUTLER (*coldly*).

Your obliged humble servant, my Lord Lieutenant-General!

[*The paper comes to* BUTLER, *who goes to the table to subscribe it. The front of the stage is vacant, so that both the* PICCOLOMINIS, *each on the side where he had been from the commencement of the scene, remain alone.*

OCTAVIO (*after having some time watched his son in silence, advances somewhat nearer to him*). You were long absent from us, friend!

MAX.

I——urgent business detained me.

OCTAVIO.

And, I observe, you are still absent!

MAX.

You know this crowd and bustle always makes me silent.

OCTAVIO (*advancing still nearer*).

May I be permitted to ask what the business was that detained you? *Tertsky* knows it without asking!

MAX.

What does Tertsky know?

OCTAVIO.

He was the only one who did not miss you.

ISOLANI (*who has been attending to them from some distance, steps up*).

Well done, father! Rout out his baggage! Beat up his quarters! there is something there that should not be.

TERTSKY (*with the paper*).

Is there none wanting? Have the whole subscribed?

OCTAVIO.

All.

TERTSKY (*calling aloud*).

Ho! Who subscribes?

BUTLER (*to* TERTSKY).

Count the names. There ought to be just thirty.

TERTSKY.

Here is a cross.

TIEFENBACH.

That 's my mark.

ISOLANI.

He cannot write; but his cross is a good cross, and is honoured by Jews as well as Christians.

OCTAVIO (*presses on to* MAX.).

Come, general! let us go. It is late.

TERTSKY.

One Piccolomini only has signed.

ISOLANI (*pointing to* MAX.).

Look! that is your man, that statue there, who has had neither eye, ear, nor tongue for us the whole evening. (MAX. *receives the paper from* TERTSKY, *which he looks upon vacantly*).

SCENE XIV.

To these enter ILLO *from the inner room. He has in his hand the golden service-cup, and is extremely distempered with drinking:* GOETZ *and* BUTLER *follow him, endeavouring to keep him back.*

ILLO.

What do you want? Let me go.

GOETZ *and* BUTLER.

Drink no more, Illo! For heaven's sake, drink no more.

ILLO (*goes up to* OCTAVIO, *and shakes him cordially by the hand, and then drinks*).

Octavio! I bring this to you! Let all grudge be drowned in this friendly bowl! I know well enough, ye never loved me—Devil take me!—and I never loved you!—I am always even with people in that way!—Let what 's past be past—that is, you understand—forgotten! I esteem you infinitely. (*Embracing him repeatedly*). You have not a dearer friend on earth than I—but that you know. The fellow that cries rogue to you calls me villain—and I 'll strangle him!—my *dear* friend!

TERTSKY (*whispering to him*).

Art in thy senses? For heaven's sake, Illo, think where you are!

ILLO (*aloud*).

What do you mean?—There are none but friends here, are there! (*Looks round the whole circle with a jolly and triumphant air.*) Not a sneaker among us, thank heaven!

TERTSKY (*to* BUTLER, *eagerly*).

Take him off with you, force him off, I entreat you, Butler!

BUTLER (*to* ILLO).

Field Marshal! a word with you. (*Leads him to the side-board.*)

ILLO (*cordially*).

A thousand for one; Fill—Fill it once more up to the brim.—To this gallant man's health!

ISOLANI (*to* MAX., *who all the while has been staring on the paper with fixed but vacant eyes*).

Slow and sure, my noble brother?—Hast *parsed* it all yet?—Some words yet to go through?—Ha?

MAX. (*waking as from a dream*).

What am I to do?

TERTSKY, *and at the same time* ISOLANI.

Sign your name. (OCTAVIO *directs his eyes on him with intense anxiety*).

MAX. (*returns the paper*).

Let it stay till to-morrow. It is *business*—to-day I am not sufficiently collected. Send it to me to-morrow.

TERTSKY.

Nay, collect yourself a little.

ISOLANI.

Awake man! awake!—Come, thy signature, and have done with it! What? Thou art the youngest in the whole company, and wouldst be wiser than all of us together? Look there! thy father has signed—we have all signed.

TERTSKY (*to* OCTAVIO).

Use your influence. Instruct him.

OCTAVIO.

My son is at the age of discretion.

ILLO (*leaves the service-cup on the sideboard*).

What 's the dispute?

TERTSKY.

He declines subscribing the paper.

MAX.

I say, it may as well stay till to-morrow.

ILLO.

It cannot stay. We have all subscribed to it—and so must you.—You must subscribe.

MAX.

Illo, good night!

ILLO.

No! You come not off so! The Duke shall learn who are his friends. (*All collect round* ILLO *and* MAX.)

MAX.

What my sentiments are towards the Duke, the Duke knows, every one knows—what need of this wild stuff?

ILLO.

This is the thanks the Duke gets for his partiality to Italians and foreigners.—Us Bohemians he holds for little better than dullards—nothing pleases him but what 's outlandish.

TERTSKY (*in extreme embarrassment, to the Commanders, who at* ILLO's *words give a sudden start, as preparing to resent them*).

It is the wine that speaks, and not his reason. Attend not to him, I entreat you.

ISOLANI (*with a bitter laugh*).

Wine invents nothing: it only *tattles*.

ILLO.

He who is not with me is against me. Your tender consciences! Unless they can slip out by a back-door, by a puny proviso——

TERTSKY (*interrupting him*).

He is stark mad—don't listen to him!

ILLO (*raising his voice to the highest pitch*).

Unless they can slip out by a *proviso*.—What of the proviso? The devil take this proviso!

MAX. (*has his attention roused, and looks again into the paper*).

What is there here then of such perilous import? You make me curious—I must look closer at it.

TERTSKY (*in a low voice to* ILLO).

What are you doing, Illo? You are ruining us.

TIEFENBACH (*to* KOLATTO).

Ay, ay! I observed, that before we sat down to supper, it was read differently.

GOETZ.

Why, I seemed to think so too.

ISOLANI.

What do I care for that? Where there stand other names, mine can stand too.

TIEFENBACH.

Before supper there *was* a certain proviso therein, or short clause concerning our duties to the Emperor.

BUTLER (*to one of the commanders*).

For shame, for shame! Bethink you. What is the main business here? The question now is, whether we shall keep our General, or let him retire. One must not take these things too nicely and over-scrupulously.

ISOLANI (*to one of the Generals*).

Did the Duke make any of these provisos when he gave you your regiment?

TERTSKY (*to* GOETZ).

Or when he gave you the office of army-purveyancer, which brings you in yearly a thousand pistoles!

ILLO.

He is a rascal who makes us out to be rogues. If there be any one that wants satisfaction, let him say so, —I am his man.

TIEFENBACH.

Softly, softly! 'T was but a word or two.

MAX. (*having read the paper gives it back*).

Till to-morrow, therefore!

ILLO (*stammering with rage and fury, loses all command over himself, and presents the paper to* MAX. *with one hand, and his sword in the other*).

Subscribe—Judas!

ISOLANI.

Out upon you, Illo!

OCTAVIO' TERTSKY, BUTLER (*all together*).

Down with the sword!

MAX. (*rushes on him suddenly and disarms him, then to Count* TERTSKY).

Take him off to bed.

[MAX. *leaves the stage.* ILLO *cursing and raving is held back by some of the Officers, and amidst a universal confusion the Curtain drops.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.

A Chamber in PICCOLOMINI's *Mansion.—It is Night.*

OCTAVIO PICCOLOMINI. *A Valet de Chambre, with Lights.*

OCTAVIO.

——And when my son comes in, conduct him hither. What is the hour?

VALET.

'T is on the point of morning.

OCTAVIO.

Set down the light. We mean not to undress. You may retire to sleep.

[*Exit Valet.* OCTAVIO *paces, musing, across the chamber;* MAX. PICCOLOMINI *enters unobserved, and looks at his father for some moments in silence.*

MAX.

Art thou offended with me? Heaven knows
That odious business was no fault of mine.
'T is true, indeed, I saw thy signature,
What *thou* hadst sanction'd, should not, it might seem,
Have come amiss to me. But—'t is my nature—
Thou know'st that in such matters I must follow
My own light, not another's.

OCTAVIO (*goes up to him and embraces him*).

Follow it,
O follow it still further, my best son!
To-night, dear boy! it hath more faithfully
Guided thee than the example of thy father.

MAX.

Declare thyself less darkly.

OCTAVIO.

I will do so.
For after what has taken place this night,
There must remain no secrets 'twixt us two.

[*Both seat themselves.*

Max. Piccolomini! what thinkest thou of
The oath that was sent round for signatures?

MAX.

I hold it for a thing of harmless import,
Although I love not these set declarations.

OCTAVIO.

And on no other ground hast thou refused
The signature they fain had wrested from thee?

MAX.

It was a serious business——I was absent—
The affair itself seem'd not so urgent to me.

OCTAVIO.

Be open, Max. Thou hadst then no suspicion?

MAX.

Suspicion! what suspicion? Not the least.

OCTAVIO.

Thank thy good angel, Piccolomini:
He drew thee back unconscious from the abyss.

MAX.

I know not what thou meanest.

OCTAVIO.

I will tell thee.
Fain would they have extorted from thee, son,
The sanction of thy name to villany;
Yea, with a single flourish of thy pen,
Made thee renounce thy duty and thy honour!

MAX. (*rises*).

Octavio!

OCTAVIO.

Patience! Seat yourself. Much yet
Hast thou to hear from me, friend!—hast for years
Lived in incomprehensible illusion.
Before thine eyes is Treason drawing out
As black a web as e'er was spun for venom:
A power of hell o'erclouds thy understanding.
I dare no longer stand in silence—dare
No longer see thee wandering on in darkness,
Nor pluck the bandage from thine eyes.

MAX.

My father!
Yet, ere thou speakest, a moment's pause of thought!
If your disclosures should appear to be
Conjectures only—and almost I fear
They will be nothing further—spare them! I
Am not in that collected mood at present,
That I could listen to them quietly.

OCTAVIO.

The deeper cause thou hast to hate this light,
The more impatient cause have I, my son,
To force it on thee. To the innocence
And wisdom of thy heart I could have trusted thee
With calm assurance—but I see the net
Preparing—and it is thy heart itself
Alarms me for thine innocence—that secret,
[*Fixing his eye steadfastly on his son's face.*
Which thou concealest, forces *mine* from me.
[MAX. *attempts to answer, but hesitates, and casts his eyes to the ground embarrassed.*
OCTAVIO (*after a pause*).
Know, then, they are duping thee!—a most foul game
With thee and with us all—nay, hear me calmly—
The Duke even now is playing. He assumes
The mask, as if he would forsake the army;
And in this moment makes he preparations
That army from the Emperor to *steal*,
And carry it over to the enemy!

MAX.

That low Priest's legend I know well, but did not
Expect to hear it from thy mouth.

OCTAVIO.

That mouth,
From which thou hearest it at this present moment,
Doth warrant thee that it is no Priest's legend.

MAX.

How mere a maniac they supposed the Duke;
What, he can meditate?—the Duke?—can dream
That he can lure away full thirty thousand
Tried troops and true, all honourable soldiers,
More than a thousand noblemen among them,
From oaths, from duty, from their honour lure them,
And make them all unanimous to do
A deed that brands them scoundrels?

OCTAVIO.

Such a deed,
With such a front of infamy, the Duke
No ways desires—what he requires of us
Bears a far gentler appellation. Nothing
He wishes, but to give the Empire peace.
And so, because the Emperor hates this peace,
Therefore the Duke—the Duke will force him to it.
All parts of the Empire will he pacify,
And for his trouble will retain in payment
(What he has already in his gripe)—Bohemia!

MAX.

Has he, Octavio, merited of us,
That we—that we should think so vilely of him?

OCTAVIO.

What *we would* think is not the question here,
The affair speaks for itself—and clearest proofs!
Hear me, my son—'t is not unknown to thee,
In what ill credit with the Court we stand.
But little dost thou know, or guess, what tricks,
What base intrigues, what lying artifices,
Have been employed—for this sole end—to sow
Mutiny in the camp! All bands are loosed—
Loosed all the bands, that link the officer
To his liege Emperor, all that bind the soldier
Affectionately to the citizen.
Lawless he stands, and threateningly beleaguers
The state he 's bound to guard. To such a height
'T is swoln, that at this hour the Emperor
Before his armies—his own armies—trembles;
Yea, in his capital, his palace, fears
The traitors' poniards, and is meditating
To hurry off and hide his tender offspring——
Not from the Swedes, not from the Lutherans—
No! from his own troops hide and hurry them!

MAX.

Cease, cease! thou torturest, shatterest me. I know
That oft we tremble at an empty terror;
But the false phantasm brings a real misery.

OCTAVIO.

It is no phantasm. An intestine war,
Of all the most unnatural and cruel,
Will burst out into flames, if instantly
We do not fly and stifle it. The Generals
Are many of them long ago won over;
The subalterns are vacillating—whole
Regiments and garrisons are vacillating.
To foreigners our strongholds are entrusted;
To that suspected Schafgotch is the whole
Force of Silesia given up: to Tertsky
Five regiments, foot and horse—to Isolani,
To Illo, Kinsky, Butler, the best troops.

MAX.

Likewise to both of us.

OCTAVIO.

Because the Duke
Believes he has secured us—means to lure us
Still further on by splendid promises.
To me he portions forth the princedoms, Glatz
And Sagan; and too plain I see the angel
With which he doubts not to catch *thee*.

MAX.

No! no!
I tell thee—no!

OCTAVIO.

O open yet thine eyes!
And to what purpose think'st thou he has called us
Hither to Pilsen?—to avail himself
Of our advice?—O when did Friedland ever
Need our advice?—Be calm, and listen to me.
To sell ourselves are we called hither, and
Decline we that—to be his hostages.
Therefore doth noble Galas stand aloof;
Thy father, too, thou wouldst not have seen here,
If higher duties had not held him fetter'd.

MAX.

He makes no secret of it—needs make none—
That we're called hither for his sake—he owns it.
He needs our aidance to maintain himself—
He did so much for us; and 't is but fair
That we too should do somewhat now for him.

OCTAVIO.

And know'st thou what it is which we must do?
That Illo's drunken mood betray'd it to thee.
Bethink thyself—what hast thou heard, what seen?
The counterfeited paper—the omission
Of that particular clause, so full of meaning,
Does it not prove, that they would bind us down
To nothing good?

MAX.

That counterfeited paper
Appears to me no other than a trick
Of Illo's own device. These underhand
Traders in great men's interests ever use
To urge and hurry all things to the extreme.
They see the Duke at variance with the court,
And fondly think to serve him, when they widen
The breach irreparably. Trust me, father,
The Duke knows nothing of all this.

OCTAVIO.

It grieves me
That I must dash to earth, that I must shatter
A faith so specious; but I may not spare thee!
For this is not a time for tenderness.
Thou must take measures, speedy ones—must act.
I therefore will confess to thee, that all
Which I 've entrusted to thee now—that all
Which seems to thee so unbelievable,
That—yes, I will tell thee—(*a pause*)—Max.! I had it all
From his own mouth—from the Duke's mouth I had it.

MAX. (*in excessive agitation*).

No!—no!—never!

OCTAVIO.

Himself confided to me
What I, 't is true, had long before discover'd
By other means—himself confided to me,
That 't was his settled plan to join the Swedes;
And, at the head of the united armies,
Compel the Emperor——

MAX.

He is passionate,
The Court has stung him—he is sore all over
With injuries and affronts; and in a moment
Of irritation, what if he, for once,
Forgot himself? He 's an impetuous man.

OCTAVIO.

Nay, in cold blood he did confess this to me:
And having construed my astonishment
Into a scruple of his power, he showed me
His written evidences—showed me letters,
Both from the Saxon and the Swede, that gave
Promise of aidance, and defined the amount.

MAX.

It cannot be!—can *not* be!—*can* not be!
Dost thou not see, it cannot!
Thou wouldst of necessity have shown him
Such horror, such deep loathing—that or he
Had taken thee for his better genius, or
Thou stood'st not now a living man before me—

OCTAVIO.

I have laid open my objections to him,
Dissuaded him with pressing earnestness;
But my *abhorrence*, the full sentiment
Of my *whole* heart—that I have still kept sacred
To my own consciousness.

MAX.

And *thou* hast been
So treacherous? That looks not like my father!
I trusted not thy words, when thou didst tell me
Evil of him; much less can I *now* do it,
That thou calumniatest thy own self.

OCTAVIO.

I did not thrust myself into his secresy.

MAX.

Uprightness merited his confidence.

OCTAVIO.

He was no longer worthy of sincerity.

MAX.

Dissimulation, sure, was still less worthy
Of thee, Octavio!

OCTAVIO.

Gave I him a cause
To entertain a scruple of my honour?

MAX.

That he did not, evinced his confidence.

OCTAVIO.

Dear son, it is not always possible
Still to preserve that infant purity
Which the voice teaches in our inmost heart,
Still in alarum, for ever on the watch
Against the wiles of wicked men: e'en Virtue
Will sometimes bear away her outward robes
Soiled in the wrestle with Iniquity.
This is the curse of every evil deed,
That, propagating still, it brings forth evil.
I do not cheat my better soul with sophisms:
I but perform my orders; the Emperor
Prescribes my conduct to me. Dearest boy,
Far better were it, doubtless, if we all
Obey'd the heart at all times; but so doing,
In this our present sojourn with bad men,
We must abandon many an honest object.
'T is now our call to serve the Emperor;
By what means he can best be served—the heart
May whisper what it will—this is our call!

MAX.

It seems a thing appointed, that to-day
I should not comprehend, not understand thee.
The Duke, thou say'st, did honestly pour out
His heart to thee, but for an evil purpose;
And thou dishonestly hast cheated him
For a good purpose! Silence, I entreat thee—
My friend, thou stealest not from me—
Let me not lose my father!

OCTAVIO (*suppressing resentment*).

As yet thou know'st not all, my son. I have
Yet somewhat to disclose to thee. [*After a pause.*
Duke Friedland
Hath made his preparations. He relies
Upon his stars. He deems us unprovided,
And thinks to fall upon us by surprise.
Yea, in his dream of hope, he grasps already
The golden circle in his hand. He errs,
We too have been in action—he but grasps
His evil fate, most evil, most mysterious!

MAX.

O nothing rash, my sire! By all that 's good
Let me invoke thee—no precipitation!

OCTAVIO.

With light tread stole he on his evil way,
And light tread hath Vengeance stole on after him.
Unseen she stands already, dark behind him—
But one step more—he shudders in her grasp!
Thou hast seen Questenberg with me. As yet
Thou know'st but his ostensible commission:
He brought with him a *private* one, my son!
And that was for me only.

MAX.

May I know it?

OCTAVIO (*seizes the patent*).

Max.!
[*A pause.*
——In this disclosure place I in thy hands
The Empire's welfare and thy father's life.
Dear to thy inmost heart is Wallenstein:
A powerful tie of love, of veneration,
Hath knit thee to him from thy earliest youth.
Thou nourishest the *wish*.—O let me still
Anticipate thy loitering confidence!
The *hope* thou nourishest to knit thyself
Yet closer to him——

MAX.

Father——

OCTAVIO.

O my son!
I trust thy heart undoubtingly. But am I
Equally sure of thy collectedness?
Wilt thou be able, with calm countenance,
To enter this man's presence, when that I
Have trusted to thee his whole fate?

MAX.

According
As thou dost trust me, father, with his crime.

[OCTAVIO *takes a paper out of his escrutoire, and gives it to him.*

MAX.

What? how? a full Imperial patent!

OCTAVIO.

Read it.

MAX. (*just glances on it*).

Duke Friedland sentenced and condemn'd!

OCTAVIO.

Even so.

MAX. (*throws down the paper*).

O this is too much! O unhappy error!

OCTAVIO.

Read on. Collect thyself.

MAX. (*after he has read further, with a look of affright and astonishment on his father*).

How! what! Thou! thou!

OCTAVIO.

But for the present moment, till the King
Of Hungary may safely join the army,
Is the command assign'd to me.

MAX.

And think'st thou,
Dost thou believe, that thou wilt tear it from him?
O never hope it!—Father! father! father!
An inauspicious office is enjoin'd thee.
This paper here—this! and wilt thou enforce it?
The mighty in the middle of his host,
Surrounded by his thousands, him wouldst thou
Disarm—degrade! Thou art lost, both thou and all of us.

OCTAVIO.

What hazard I incur thereby, I know.
In the great hand of God I stand. The Almighty
Will cover with his shield the Imperial house,
And shatter, in his wrath, the work of darkness.
The Emperor hath true servants still; and even
Here in the camp, there are enough brave men
Who for the good cause will fight gallantly.
The faithful have been warn'd—the dangerous
Are closely watch'd. I wait but the first step,
And then immediately——

MAX.

What! on suspicion?
Immediately?

OCTAVIO.

The Emperor is no tyrant.
The deed alone he 'll punish, not the wish.
The Duke hath yet his destiny in his power.
Let him but leave the treason uncompleted,
He will be silently displaced from office,
And make way to his Emperor's royal son.
An honourable exile to his castles
Will be a benefaction to him rather
Than punishment. But the first open step——

MAX.

What callest thou such a step? A wicked step
Ne'er will he take; but thou mightest easily,
Yea, thou hast done it, misinterpret him.

OCTAVIO.

Nay, howsoever punishable were
Duke Friedland's purposes, yet still the steps
Which he hath taken openly, permit
A mild construction. It is my intention
To leave this paper wholly uninforced
Till some act is committed which convicts him
Of a high-treason, without doubt or plea,
And that shall sentence him.

MAX.

But who the judge?

OCTAVIO.

Thyself.

MAX.

For ever, then, this paper will lie idle.

OCTAVIO.

Too soon, I fear, its powers must all be proved.
After the counter-promise of this evening,
It cannot be but he must deem himself
Secure of the majority with *us;*
And of the army's general sentiment
He hath a pleasing proof in that petition
Which thou delivered'st to him from the regiments.
Add this too—I have letters that the Rhinegrave
Hath changed his route, and travels by forced marches
To the Bohemian Forests. What this purports,
Remains unknown; and, to confirm suspicion,
This night a Swedish nobleman arrived here.

MAX.

I have thy word. Thou 'lt not proceed to action
Before thou hast convinced me—me myself.

OCTAVIO.

Is it possible? Still, after all thou know'st,
Canst thou believe still in his innocence?

MAX. (*with enthusiasm*).

Thy judgment may mistake; my heart can not.
[*Moderates his voice and manner.*
These reasons might expound thy spirit or mine;
But they expound not Friedland—I have faith:
For as he knits his fortunes to the stars,
Even so doth he resemble them in secret,
Wonderful, still inexplicable courses!
Trust me, they do him wrong. All will be solved.
These smokes at once will kindle into flame—
The edges of this black and stormy cloud
Will brighten suddenly, and we shall view
The Unapproachable glide out in splendour.

OCTAVIO.

I will await it.

SCENE II.

OCTAVIO *and* MAX. *as before. To them the* VALET OF THE CHAMBER.

OCTAVIO.

How now, then?

VALET.

A dispatch is at the door.

OCTAVIO.

So early? From whom comes he then? Who is it?

VALET.

That he refused to tell me.

OCTAVIO.

Lead him in:
And, hark you—let it not transpire.
[*Exit* VALET; *the* CORNET *steps in.*

OCTAVIO.

Ha! Cornet—is it you? and from Count Galas?
Give me your letters.

CORNET.

The Lieutenant-general
Trusted it not to letters.

OCTAVIO.

And what is it?

CORNET.

He bade me tell you—Dare I speak openly here?

OCTAVIO.

My son knows all.

CORNET.

We have him.

OCTAVIO.

Whom?

CORNET.

Sesina,
The old negociator.

OCTAVIO (*eagerly*).

And you have him?

CORNET.

In the Bohemian Forest Captain Mohrbrand
Found and secured him yester morning early:
He was proceeding then to Regensburg,
And on him were dispatches for the Swede.

OCTAVIO.

And the dispatches——

CORNET.

The Lieutenant-general
Sent them that instant to Vienna, and
The prisoner with them.

OCTAVIO.

This is, indeed, a tiding!
That fellow is a precious casket to us,
Enclosing weighty things.—Was much found on him?

CORNET.

I think, six packets, with Count Tertsky's arms.

OCTAVIO.

None in the Duke's own hand?

CORNET.

Not that I know.

OCTAVIO.

And old Sesina?

CORNET.

He was sorely frighten'd,
When it was told him he must to Vienna.
But the Count Altringer bade him take heart,
Would he but make a full and free confession.

OCTAVIO.

Is Altringer then with your Lord? I heard
That he lay sick at Linz.

CORNET.

These three days past
He 's with my master, the Lieutenant-general,
At Frauenburg. Already have they sixty
Small companies together, chosen men;
Respectfully they greet you with assurances,
That they are only waiting your commands.

OCTAVIO.

In a few days may great events take place.
And when must you return?

CORNET.

I wait your orders.

OCTAVIO.

Remain till evening.
[CORNET *signifies his assent and obeisance, and is going.*
No one saw you—ha?

CORNET.

No living creature. Through the cloister wicket
The Capuchins, as usual, let me in.

OCTAVIO.

Go, rest your limbs, and keep yourself conceal'd.
I hold it probable, that yet ere evening
I shall dispatch you. The development
Of this affair approaches: ere the day,
That even now is dawning in the heaven,

Ere this eventful day hath set, the lot
That must decide our fortunes will be drawn.
[*Exit* CORNET.

SCENE III.

OCTAVIO *and* MAX. PICCOLOMINI.

OCTAVIO.

Well—and what now, son? All will soon be clear;
For all, I'm certain, went through that Sesina.

MAX. (*who through the whole of the foregoing scene has been in a violent and visible struggle of feelings, at length starts as one resolved*).

I will procure me light a shorter way.
Farewell.

OCTAVIO.

Where now?—Remain here.

MAX.

To the Duke.

OCTAVIO (*alarmed*).

What——

MAX. (*returning*).

If thou hast believed that I shall act
A part in this thy play——
Thou hast miscalculated on me grievously.
My way must be straight on. True with the tongue,
False with the heart—I may not, cannot be:
Nor can I suffer that a man should trust me—
As his friend trust me—and then lull my conscience
With such low pleas as these:—«I ask him not—
He did it all at his own hazard—and
My *mouth* has never lied to him.»—No, no!
What a friend takes me for, that I must be.
—I'll to the Duke; ere yet this day is ended
Will I demand of him that he do save
His good name from the world, and with one stride
Break through and rend this fine-spun web of yours.
He can, he will!—*I* still am his believer.
Yet I'll not pledge myself, but that those letters
May furnish you, perchance, with proofs against him.
How far may not this Tertsky have proceeded—
What may not he himself too have permitted
Himself to do, to snare the enemy,
The laws of war excusing? Nothing, save
His own mouth shall convict him—nothing less!
And face to face will I go question him.

OCTAVIO.

Thou wilt?

MAX.

I will, as sure as this heart beats.

OCTAVIO.

I have, indeed, miscalculated on thee.
I calculated on a prudent son,
Who would have blest the hand beneficent
That pluck'd him back from the abyss—and lo!
A fascinated being I discover,
Whom his two eyes befool, whom passion wilders,
Whom not the broadest light of noon can heal.
Go, question him!—Be mad enough, I pray thee.
The purpose of thy father, of thy Emperor,
Go, give it up free booty:—Force me, drive me
To an open breach before the time. And now,
Now that a miracle of heaven had guarded
My secret purpose even to this hour,
And laid to sleep Suspicion's piercing eyes,
Let me have lived to see that mine own son,
With frantic enterprise, annihilates
My toilsome labours and state-policy.

MAX.

Ay—this state-policy? O how I curse it!
You will some time, with your state-policy,
Compel him to the measure: it may happen,
Because ye are *determined* that he is guilty,
Guilty ye'll *make* him. All retreat cut off,
You close up every outlet, hem him in
Narrower and narrower, till at length ye force him—
Yes, *ye*,—ye *force* him, in his desperation,
To set fire to his prison. Father! father!
That never can end well—it cannot—will not!
And let it be decided as it may,
I see with boding heart the near approach
Of an ill-starr'd, unblest catastrophe.
For this great Monarch-spirit, if he fall,
Will drag a world into the ruin with him.
And as a ship (that midway on the ocean
Takes fire) at once, and with a thunder-burst
Explodes, and with itself shoots out its crew
In smoke and ruin betwixt sea and heaven;
So will he, falling, draw down in his fall
All us, who 're fix'd and mortised to his fortune.
Deem of it what thou wilt; but pardon me,
That I must bear me on in my own way.
All must remain pure betwixt him and me;
And, ere the day-light dawns, it must be known
Which I must lose—my father, or my friend.
[*During his exit the curtain drops.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

Scene a Room fitted up for astrological labours, and provided with celestial Charts, with Globes, Telescopes, Quadrants, and other mathematical Instruments.—Seven Colossal Figures, representing the Planets, each with a transparent Star of a different Colour on its Head, stand in a semi-circle in the Background, so that Mars and Saturn are nearest the Eye.—The Remainder of the Scene, and its Disposition, is given in the Fourth Scene of the Second Act.—There must be a Curtain over the Figures, which may be dropped, and conceal them on occasions.

[*In the Fifth Scene of this Act it must be dropped; but in the Seventh Scene, it must be again drawn up wholly or in part.*]

WALLENSTEIN *at a black Table, on which a Speculum Astrologicum is described with Chalk.* SENI *is taking Observations through a window.*

WALLENSTEIN.

All well—and now let it be ended, Seni.—Come,
The dawn commences, and Mars rules the hour.
We must give o'er the operation. Come,
We know enough.

SENI.

Your Highness must permit me
Just to contemplate Venus. She 's now rising:
Like as a sun, so shines she in the east.

WALLENSTEIN.

She is at present in her perigee,
And shoots down now her strongest influences.
[*Contemplating the figure on the table.*

Auspicious aspect! fateful in conjunction,
At length the mighty three corradiate;
And the two stars of blessing, Jupiter
And Venus, take between them the malignant
Slily-malicious Mars, and thus compel
Into *my* service that old mischief-founder:
For long he view'd me hostilely, and ever
With beam oblique, or perpendicular,
Now in the Quartile, now in the Secundan,
Shot his red lightnings at my stars, disturbing
Their blessed influences and sweet aspects.
Now they have conquer'd the old enemy,
And bring him in the heavens a prisoner to me.

SENI (*who has come down from the window*).

And in a corner house, your Highness—think of that!
That makes each influence of double strength.

WALLENSTEIN.

And sun and moon, too, in the Sextile aspect,
The soft light with the vehement—so I love it.
SOL is the heart, LUNA the head of heaven,
Bold be the plan, fiery the execution.

SENI.

And both the mighty Lumina by no
Maleficus affronted. Lo! Saturnus,
Innocuous, powerless, in cadente Domo.

WALLENSTEIN.

The empire of Saturnus is gone by;
Lord of the secret birth of things is he;
Within the lap of earth, and in the depths
Of the imagination dominates;
And his are all things that eschew the light.
The time is o'er of brooding and contrivance,
For Jupiter, the lustrous, lordeth now,
And the dark work, complete of preparation,
He draws by force into the realm of light.
Now must we hasten on to action, ere
The scheme, and most auspicious posture
Parts o'er my head, and takes once more its flight;
For the heavens journey still, and sojourn not.

[*There are knocks at the door.*

There 's some one knocking there. See who it is.

TERTSKY (*from without*).

Open, and let me in.

WALLENSTEIN.

Ay—'t is Tertsky.
What is there of such urgence? We are busy.

TERTSKY (*from without*).

Lay all aside at present, I entreat you.
It suffers no delaying.

WALLENSTEIN.

Open, Seni!

[*While* SENI *opens the door for* TERTSKY, WALLENSTEIN *draws the curtain over the figures.*

TERTSKY (*enters*).

Hast thou already heard it? He is taken.
Galas has given him up to the Emperor.

[SENI *draws off the black table, and exit.*

SCENE II.

WALLENSTEIN, COUNT TERTSKY.

WALLENSTEIN (*to* TERTSKY).

Who has been taken?—Who is given up?

TERTSKY.

The man who knows our secrets, who knows every
Negotiation with the Swede and Saxon,
Through whose hands all and every thing has pass'd—

WALLENSTEIN (*drawing back*).

Nay, not Sesina?—Say, No! I entreat thee.

TERTSKY.

All on his road for Regensburg to the Swede
He was plunged down upon by Galas' agent,
Who had been long in ambush, lurking for him.
There must have been found on him my whole packet
To Thur, to Kinsky, to Oxenstirn, to Arnheim:
All this is in their hands; they have now an insight
Into the whole—our measures, and our motives.

SCENE III.

To them enters ILLO.

ILLO (*to* TERTSKY).

Has he heard it?

TERTSKY.

He has heard it.

ILLO (*to* WALLENSTEIN).

Thinkest thou still
To make thy peace with the Emperor, to regain
His confidence?—E'en were it now thy wish
To abandon all thy plans, yet still they know
What thou hast wish'd; then forwards thou must press;
Retreat is now no longer in thy power.

TERTSKY.

They have documents against us, and in hands,
Which show beyond all power of contradiction—

WALLENSTEIN.

Of my hand-writing—no iota. Thee
I punish for thy lies.

ILLO.

And thou believest,
That what this man, that what thy sister's husband,
Did in thy name, will not stand on thy reck'ning?
His word must pass for thy word with the Swede,
And not with those that hate thee at Vienna.

TERTSKY.

In writing thou gavest nothing—But bethink thee,
How far thou ventured'st by word of mouth
With this Sesina! And will he be silent?
If he can save himself by yielding up
Thy secret purposes, will he retain them?

ILLO.

Thyself dost not conceive it possible;
And since they now have evidence authentic
How far thou hast already gone, speak!—tell us,
What art thou waiting for? thou canst no longer
Keep thy command; and beyond hope of rescue
Thou 'rt lost, if thou resign'st it.

WALLENSTEIN.

In the army
Lies my security. The army will not
Abandon me. Whatever they may know,
The power is mine, and they must gulp it down—
And substitute I caution for my fealty,
They must be satisfied, at least appear so.

ILLO.

The army, Duke, *is* thine now—for this moment—
'T is thine: but think with terror on the slow,
The quiet power of time. From open violence
The attachment of thy soldiery secures thee
To-day—to-morrow; but grant'st thou them a respite,

Unheard, unseen, they 'll undermine that love
On which thou now dost feel so firm a footing,
With wily theft will draw away from thee
One after the other——

WALLENSTEIN.

'T is a cursed accident!

ILLO.

Oh! I will call it a most blessed one,
If it work on thee as it ought to do,
Hurry thee on to action—to decision—
The Swedish General——

WALLENSTEIN.

He 's arrived! Know'st thou
What his commission is——

ILLO.

To thee alone
Will he entrust the purpose of his coming.

WALLENSTEIN.

A cursed, cursed accident! Yes, yes,
Sesina knows too much, and won't be silent.

TERTSKY.

He 's a Bohemian fugitive and rebel,
His neck is forfeit. Can he save himself
At thy cost, think you he will scruple it?
And if they put him to the torture, will he,
Will *he*, that dastardling, have strength enough——

WALLENSTEIN (*lost in thought*).

Their confidence is lost—irreparably!
And I may act what way I will, I shall
Be and remain for ever in their thought
A traitor to my country. How sincerely
Soever I return back to my duty,
It will no longer help me——

ILLO.

Ruin thee,
That it will do! Not thy fidelity,
Thy weakness will be deem'd the sole occasion—

WALLENSTEIN (*pacing up and down in extreme agitation*).

What! I must realize it now in earnest,
Because I toy'd too freely with the thought?
Accursed he who dallies with a devil!
And must I—I *must* realize it now—
Now, while I have the power, it *must* take place?

ILLO.

Now—now—ere they can ward and parry it!

WALLENSTEIN (*looking at the paper of signatures*).

I have the Generals' word—a written promise!
Max. Piccolomini stands not here—how 's that?

TERTSKY.

It was——he fancied——

ILLO.

Mere self-willedness.
There needed no such thing 'twixt him and you.

WALLENSTEIN.

He is quite right—there needeth no such thing,
The regiments, too, deny to march for Flanders—
Have sent me in a paper of remonstrance,
And openly resist the Imperial orders.
The first step to revolt 's already taken.

ILLO.

Believe me, thou wilt find it far more easy
To lead them over to the enemy
Than to the Spaniard.

WALLENSTEIN.

I will hear, however,
What the Swede has to say to me.

ILLO (*eagerly to* TERTSKY).

Go, call him!
He stands without the door in waiting.

WALLENSTEIN.

Stay!
Stay yet a little. It hath taken me
All by surprise,—it came too quick upon me;
'T is wholly novel, that an accident,
With its dark lordship, and blind agency,
Should force me on with it.

ILLO.

First hear him only,
And after weigh it. [*Exeunt* TERTSKY *and* ILLO.

SCENE IV.

WALLENSTEIN (*in soliloquy*).

Is it possible?
Is 't so? I *can* no longer what I *would?*
No longer draw back at my liking? I
Must *do* the deed, because I *thought* of it,
And fed this heart here with a dream? Because
I did not scowl temptation from my presence,
Dallied with thoughts of possible fulfilment,
Commenced no movement, left all time uncertain,
And only kept the road, the access open?
By the great God of Heaven! It was not
My serious meaning, it was ne'er resolve.
I but amused myself with thinking of it.
The free-will tempted me, the power to do
Or not to do it.—Was it criminal
To make the fancy minister to hope,
To fill the air with pretty toys of air,
And clutch fantastic sceptres moving t'ward me!
Was not the will kept free? Beheld I not
The road of duty close beside me—but
One little step, and once more I was in it!
Where am I? Whither have I been transported?
No road, no track behind me, but a wall,
Impenetrable, insurmountable,
Rises obedient to the spells I mutter'd
And meant not—my own doings tower behind me.
[*Pauses and remains in deep thought.*
A punishable man I seem; the guilt,
Try what I will, I cannot roll off from me;
The equivocal demeanour of my life
Bears witness on my prosecutor's party.
And even my purest acts from purest motives
Suspicion poisons with malicious gloss.
Were I that thing for which I pass, that traitor,
A goodly outside I had sure reserved,
Had drawn the coverings thick and double round me,
Been calm and chary of my utterance;
But being conscious of the innocence
Of my intent, my uncorrupted will,
I gave way to my humours, to my passion:
Bold were my words, because my deeds were *not.*
Now every planless measure, chance event,
The threat of rage, the vaunt of joy and triumph,
And all the May-games of a heart o'erflowing,
Will they connect, and weave them all together
Into one web of treason; all will be plan,
My eye ne'er absent from the far-off mark,

Step tracing step, each step a politic progress;
And out of all they 'll fabricate a charge
So specious, that I must myself stand dumb.
I am caught in my own net, and only force,
Nought but a sudden rent can liberate me.
[*Pauses again.*
How else! since that the heart 's unbiass'd instinct
Impell'd me to the daring deed, which now
Necessity, self-preservation, *orders*.
Stern is the On-look of Necessity,
Not without shudder may a human hand
Grasp the mysterious urn of destiny.
My deed was mine, remaining in my bosom:
Once suffer'd to escape from its safe corner
Within the heart, its nursery and birth-place,
Sent forth into the Foreign, it belongs
For ever to those sly malicious powers
Whom never art of man conciliated.

[*Paces in agitation through the chamber, then pauses, and, after the pause, breaks out again into audible soliloquy.*

What is thy enterprise? thy aim? thy object?
Hast honestly confess'd it to thyself!
Power seated on a quiet throne thou 'dst shake,
Power on an ancient consecrated throne,
Strong in possession, founded in old custom;
Power by a thousand tough and stringy roots
Fix'd to the people's pious nursery-faith.
This, this will be no strife of strength with strength.
That fear'd I not. I brave each combatant,
Whom I can look on, fixing eye to eye,
Who, full himself of courage, kindles courage
In me too. 'T is a foe invisible.
The which I fear—a fearful enemy,
Which in the human heart opposes me,
By its coward fear alone made fearful to me.
Not that, which full of life, instinct with power,
Makes known its present being; that is not
The true, the perilously formidable.
O no! it is the common, the quite common,
The thing of an eternal yesterday,
What ever was, and evermore returns,
Sterling to-morrow, for to-day 't was sterling!
For of the wholly common is man made,
And custom is his nurse! Woe then to them,
Who lay irreverent hands upon his old
House furniture, the dear inheritance
From his forefathers! For time consecrates;
And what is grey with age becomes religion.
Be in possession, and thou hast the right,
And sacred will the many guard it for thee!
[*To the* PAGE, *who here enters.*
The Swedish officer?—Well, let him enter.

[*The* PAGE *exit,* WALLENSTEIN *fixes his eye in deep thought on the door.*

Yet is it pure—as yet!—the crime has come
Not o'er this threshold yet—so slender is
The boundary that divideth life's two paths.

SCENE V.

WALLENSTEIN *and* WRANGEL.

WALLENSTEIN (*after having fixed a searching look on him*).

Your name is Wrangel?

WRANGEL.

Gustave Wrangel, General
Of the Sudermanian Blues.

WALLENSTEIN.

It was a Wrangel
Who injured me materially at Stralsund,
And by his brave resistance was the cause
Of the opposition which that sea-port made.

WRANGEL.

It was the doing of the element
With which you fought, my Lord! and not my merit.
The Baltic Neptune did assert his freedom:
The sea and land, it seem'd, were not to serve
One and the same.

WALLENSTEIN (*makes the motion for him to take a seat, and seats himself.*)

And where are your credentials?
Come you provided with full powers, Sir General?

WRANGEL.

There are so many scruples yet to solve——

WALLENSTEIN (*having read the credentials*).

An able letter!—Ay—he is a prudent
Intelligent master, whom you serve, Sir General!
The Chancellor writes me, that he but fulfils
His late departed Sovereign's own idea
In helping me to the Bohemian crown.

WRANGEL.

He says the truth. Our great King, now in heaven,
Did ever deem most highly of your Grace's
Pre-eminent sense and military genius;
And always the commanding Intellect,
He said, should have command, and be the King.

WALLENSTEIN.

Yes, he *might* say it safely.—General Wrangel,
[*Taking his hand affectionately.*
Come, fair and open.—Trust me, I was always
A Swede at heart. Ey! that did you experience
Both in Silesia and at Nuremburg;
I had you often in my power, and let you
Always slip out by some back-door or other.
'T is this for which the Court can ne'er forgive me,
Which drives me to this present step: and since
Our interests so run in one direction,
E'en let us have a thorough confidence
Each in the other.

WRANGEL.

Confidence will come
Has each but only first security.

WALLENSTEIN.

The Chancellor still, I see, does not quite trust me;
And, I confess—the gain does not lie wholly
To my advantage—Without doubt he thinks,
If I can play false with the Emperor,
Who is my Sov'reign, I can do the like
With the enemy, and that *the one* too were
Sooner to be forgiven me than the *other*.
Is not this your opinion too, Sir General?

WRANGEL.

I have here an office merely, no opinion.

WALLENSTEIN.

The Emperor hath urged me to the uttermost:
I can no longer honourably serve him.
For my security, in self-defence,
I take this hard step, which my conscience blames.

WRANGEL.

That I believe. So far would no one go
Who was not forced to it. [*After a pause.*
What may have impell'd
Your princely Highness in this wise to act
Toward your Sovereign Lord and Emperor,
Beseems not us to expound or criticize.
The Swede is fighting for his good old cause,
With his good sword and conscience. This concurrence,
This opportunity, is in our favour,
And all advantages in war are lawful.
We take what offers without questioning;
And if all have its due and just proportions——

WALLENSTEIN.

Of what then are ye doubting? Of my will?
Or of my power? I pledged me to the Chancellor,
Would he trust *me* with sixteen thousand men,
That I would instantly go over to them
With eighteen thousand of the Emperor's troops.

WRANGEL.

Your Grace is known to be a mighty war-chief,
To be a second Attila and Pyrrhus.
'T is talked of still with fresh astonishment,
How some years past, beyond all human faith,
You call'd an army forth, like a creation:
But yet——

WALLENSTEIN.

But yet?

WRANGEL.

But still the Chancellor thinks,
It might yet be an easier thing from nothing
To call forth sixty thousand men of battle,
Than to persuade one sixtieth part of them—

WALLENSTEIN.

What now? Out with it, friend?

WRANGEL.

To break their oaths.

WALLENSTEIN.

And he thinks *so?*—He judges like a Swede,
And like a Protestant. You Lutherans
Fight for your Bible. You are interested
About the cause; and with your *hearts* you follow
Your banners.—Among *you*, whoe'er deserts
To the enemy, hath broken covenant
With two Lords at one time.—We 've no such fancies.

WRANGEL.

Great God in Heaven! Have then the people here
No house and home, no fire-side, no altar?

WALLENSTEIN.

I will explain that to you, how it stands:—
The Austrian *has* a country, ay, and loves it,
And has good cause to love it—but this army,
That calls itself the Imperial, this that houses
Here in Bohemia, this has none—no country;
This is an outcast of all foreign lands,
Unclaim'd by town or tribe, to whom belongs
Nothing, except the universal sun.

WRANGEL.

But then the Nobles and the Officers?
Such a desertion, such a felony,
It is without example, my Lord Duke,
In the world's history.

WALLENSTEIN.

They are all mine—
Mine unconditionally—mine on all terms.
Not me, your own eyes you must trust.
[*He gives him the paper containing the written oath.* WRANGEL *reads it through, and, having read it, lays it on the table, remaining silent.*
So then?
Now comprehend you?

WRANGEL.

Comprehend who can!
My Lord Duke; I will let the mask drop—yes!
I 've full powers for a final settlement.
The Rhinegrave stands but four days' march from here
With fifteen thousand men, and only waits
For orders to proceed and join your army.
Those orders *I* give out, immediately
We 're compromised.

WALLENSTEIN.

What asks the Chancellor?

WRANGEL (*considerately*).

Twelve Regiments, every man a Swede—my head
The warranty—and all might prove at last
Only false play——

WALLENSTEIN (*starting*).

Sir Swede!

WRANGEL (*calmly proceeding*).

Am therefore forced
T' insist thereon, that he do formally,
Irrevocably break with the Emperor,
Else not a Swede is trusted to Duke Friedland.

WALLENSTEIN.

Come, brief, and open! What is the demand?

WRANGEL.

That he forthwith disarm the Spanish regiments
Attach'd to the Emperor, that he seize Prague,
And to the Swedes give up that city, with
The strong pass Egra.

WALLENSTEIN.

That is much indeed!
Prague!—Egra 's granted—But—but Prague!—'T won't do.
I give you every security
Which you may ask of me in common reason—
But Prague—Bohemia—these, Sir General,
I can myself protect.

WRANGEL.

We doubt it not.
But 't is not the protection that is now
Our sole concern. We want security,
That we shall not expend our men and money
All to no purpose.

WALLENSTEIN.

'T is but reasonable.

WRANGEL.

And till we are indemnified, so long
Stays Prague in pledge.

WALLENSTEIN.

Then trust you us so little?

WRANGEL (*rising*).

The Swede, if he would treat well with the German,
Must keep a sharp look-out. We have been call'd
Over the Baltic, we have saved the empire
From ruin—with our best blood have we seal'd
The liberty of faith, and gospel truth.
But now already is the benefaction
No longer felt, the load alone is felt.——
Ye look askance with evil eye upon us,
As foreigners, intruders in the empire,

And would fain send us, with some paltry sum
Of money, home again to our old forests.
No, no! my Lord Duke! no!—it never was
For Judas' pay, for chinking gold and silver,
That we did leave our King by the Great Stone. [1]
No, not for gold and silver have there bled
So many of our Swedish Nobles—neither
Will we, with empty laurels for our payment,
Hoist sail for our own country. *Citizens*
Will we remain upon the soil, the which
Our Monarch conquer'd for himself, and died.

WALLENSTEIN.

Help to keep down the common enemy,
And the fair border land must needs be yours.

WRANGEL.

But when the common enemy lies vanquish'd,
Who knits together our new friendship then?
We know, Duke Friedland! though perhaps the Swede
Ought not t' have known it, that you carry on
Secret negotiations with the Saxons.
Who is our warranty, that *we* are not
The sacrifices in those articles
Which 't is thought needful to conceal from us?

WALLENSTEIN (*rises*).

Think you of something better, Gustave Wrangel!
Of Prague no more.

WRANGEL.

Here my commission ends.

WALLENSTEIN.

Surrender up to you my capital!
Far liever would I face about, and step
Back to my Emperor.

WRANGEL.

If time yet permits——

WALLENSTEIN.

That lies with me, even now, at any hour.

WRANGEL.

Some days ago, perhaps. To-day, no longer;
No longer since Sesina's been a prisoner.

[WALLENSTEIN *is struck, and silenced.*

My lord Duke, hear me—We believe that you
At present do mean honourably by us.
Since *yesterday* we're sure of that—and now
This paper warrants for the troops, there's nothing
Stands in the way of our full confidence.
Prague shall not part us. Hear! The Chancellor
Contents himself with Albstadt; to your Grace
He gives up Ratschin and the narrow side.
But Egra above all must open to us,
Ere we can think of any junction.

WALLENSTEIN.

You,
You therefore must I trust, and you not me?
I will consider of your proposition.

WRANGEL.

I must entreat, that your consideration
Occupy not too long a time. Already
Has this negotiation, my Lord Duke!
Crept on into the second year. If nothing
Is settled this time, will the Chancellor
Consider it as broken off for ever.

[1] A great stone near Lützen, since called the Swede's Stone, the body of their great king having been found at the foot of it, after the battle in which he lost his life.

WALLENSTEIN.

Ye press me hard. A measure, such as this,
Ought to be *thought* of.

WRANGEL.

Ay! but think of this too,
That sudden action only can procure it
Success—think first of this, your Highness.

[*Exit* WRANGEL.

SCENE VI.

WALLENSTEIN, TERTSKY, *and* ILLO (*re-enter*).

ILLO.

Is 't all right?

TERTSKY.

Are you compromised?

ILLO.

This Swede
Went smiling from you. Yes! you 're compromised.

WALLENSTEIN.

As yet is nothing settled: and (well weigh'd)
I feel myself inclined to leave it so.

TERTSKY.

How? What is that?

WALLENSTEIN.

Come on me what will come,
The doing evil to avoid an evil
Cannot be good!

TERTSKY.

Nay, but bethink you, Duke.

WALLENSTEIN.

To live upon the mercy of these Swedes!
Of these proud-hearted Swedes!—I could not bear it.

ILLO.

Goest thou as fugitive, as mendicant?
Bringest thou not more to them than thou receivest?

SCENE VII.

To these enter the COUNTESS TERTSKY.

WALLENSTEIN.

Who sent for you? There is no business here
For women.

COUNTESS.

I am come to bid you joy.

WALLENSTEIN.

Use thy authority, Tertsky; bid her go.

COUNTESS.

Come I perhaps too early? I hope not.

WALLENSTEIN.

Set not this tongue upon me, I entreat you:
You know it is the weapon that destroys me.
I am routed, if a woman but attack me:
I cannot traffic in the trade of words
With that unreasoning sex.

COUNTESS.

I had already
Given the Bohemians a king.

WALLENSTEIN (*sarcastically*).

They have one,
In consequence, no doubt.

COUNTESS (*to the others*).

Ha! what new scruple?

TERTSKY.

The Duke will not.

COUNTESS.

He *will not* what he *must!*

ILLO.

It lies with you now. Try. For I am silenced,
When folks begin to talk to me of conscience,
And of fidelity.

COUNTESS.

How? then, when all
Lay in the far-off distance, when the road
Stretch'd out before thine eyes interminably,
Then hadst thou courage and resolve; and now,
Now that the dream is being realized,
The purpose ripe, the issue ascertain'd,
Dost thou begin to play the dastard now?
Plann'd merely, 't is a common felony;
Accomplish'd, an immortal undertaking:
And with success comes pardon hand in hand;
For all event is God's arbitrement.

SERVANT (*enters*).

The Colonel Piccolomini.

COUNTESS (*hastily*).

—Must wait.

WALLENSTEIN.

I cannot see him now. Another time.

SERVANT.

But for two minutes he entreats an audience:
Of the most urgent nature is his business.

WALLENSTEIN.

Who knows what he may bring us! I will hear him.

COUNTESS (*laughs*).

Urgent for him, no doubt; but thou mayest wait.

WALLENSTEIN.

What is it?

COUNTESS.

Thou shalt be inform'd hereafter.
First let the Swede and thee be compromised.

[*Exit* SERVANT.

WALLENSTEIN.

If there were yet a choice! if yet some milder
Way of escape were possible—I still
Will chuse it, and avoid the last extreme.

COUNTESS.

Desirest thou nothing further? Such a way
Lies still before thee. Send this Wrangel off.
Forget thou thy old hopes, cast far away
All thy past life; determine to commence
A new one. Virtue hath her heroes too,
As well as Fame and Fortune.—To Vienna—
Hence—to the Emperor—kneel before the throne;
Take a full coffer with thee—say aloud,
Thou didst but wish to prove thy fealty;
Thy whole intention but to dupe the Swede.

ILLO.

For that too 't is too late. They know too much:
He would but bear his own head to the block.

COUNTESS.

I fear not that. They have not evidence
To attaint him legally, and they avoid
The avowal of an arbitrary power.
They 'll let the Duke resign without disturbance.
I see how all will end. The King of Hungary
Makes his appearance, and 't will of itself
Be understood, that then the Duke retires.
There will not want a formal declaration:
The young King will administer the oath
To the whole army; and so all returns
To the old position. On some morrow morning
The Duke departs; and now 't is stir and bustle
Within his castles. He will hunt, and build;
Superintend his horses' pedigrees,
Creates himself a court, gives golden keys,
And introduceth strictest ceremony
In fine proportions, and nice etiquette;
Keeps open table with high cheer; in brief,
Commenceth mighty King—in miniature.
And while he prudently demeans himself,
And gives himself no actual importance,
He will be let appear whate'er he likes:
And who dares doubt, that Friedland will appear
A mighty Prince to his last dying hour?
Well now, what then? Duke Friedland is as others,
A fire-new Noble, whom the war hath raised
To price and currency, a Jonah's gourd,
An over-night creation of court-favour,
Which with an undistinguishable ease
Makes Baron or makes Prince.

WALLENSTEIN (*in extreme agitation*).

Take her away.
Let in the young Count Piccolomini.

COUNTESS.

Art thou in earnest? I entreat thee! Canst thou
Consent to bear thyself to thy own grave,
So ignominiously to be dried up?
Thy life, that arrogated such an height
To end in such a nothing! To be nothing,
When one was always nothing, is an evil
That asks no stretch of patience, a light evil;
But to become a nothing, having been——

WALLENSTEIN (*starts up in violent agitation*).

Show me a way out of this stifling crowd,
Ye powers of Aidance! Show me such a way
As *I* am capable of going.—I
Am no tongue-hero, no fine virtue-prattler;
I cannot warm by thinking; cannot say
To the good luck that turns her back upon me,
Magnanimously: « Go; I need thee not. »
Cease I to work, I am annihilated.
Dangers nor sacrifices will I shun,
If so I may avoid the last extreme;
But ere I sink down into nothingness,
Leave off so little, who began so great,
Ere that the world confuses me with those
Poor wretches, whom a day creates and crumbles,
This age and after ages[1] speak my name
With hate and dread; and Friedland be redemption
For each accursed deed!

COUNTESS.

What is there here, then,
So against nature? Help me to perceive it!
O let not Superstition's nightly goblins
Subdue thy clear bright spirit! Art thou bid
To murder?—with abhorr'd accursed poniard,
To violate the breasts that nourish'd thee?
That *were* against our nature, that might aptly
Make thy flesh shudder, and thy whole heart sicken.[2]

[1] Could I have hazarded such a Germanism, as the use of the word after-world, for posterity,—« Es spreche Welt und *Nachwelt* meinen Namen»—might have been rendered with more literal fidelity:—Let world and after-world speak out my name, etc.

[2] I have not ventured to affront the fastidious delicacy of our age with a literal translation of this line,

werth
Die Eingeweide schaudernd aufzuregen.

Yet not a few, and for a meaner object,
Have ventured even this, ay, and perform'd it.
What is there in thy case so black and monstrous?
Thou art accused of treason—whether with
Or without justice is not now the question—
Thou art lost if thou dost not avail thee quickly
Of the power which thou possessest—Friedland! *Duke!*
Tell me, where lives that thing so meek and tame,
That doth not all his living faculties
Put forth in preservation of his life?
What deed so daring, which necessity
And desperation will not sanctify?

WALLENSTEIN.

Once was this Ferdinand so gracious to me:
He loved me; he esteem'd me; I was placed
The nearest to his heart. Full many a time
We like familiar friends, both at one table,
Have banquetted together. He and I—
And the young kings themselves held me the bason
Wherewith to wash me—and is 't come to this?

COUNTESS.

So faithfully preservest thou each small favour,
And hast no memory for contumelies?
Must I remind thee, how at Regensburg
This man repaid thy faithful services?
All ranks and all conditions in the empire
Thou hadst wrong'd, to make him great,—hadst loaded on thee,
On *thee,* the hate, the curse of the whole world.
No friend existed for thee in all Germany,
And why? because thou hadst existed only
For the Emperor. To the Emperor alone
Clung Friedland in that storm which gather'd round him
At Regensburg in the Diet—and he dropp'd thee!
He let thee fall! He let thee fall a victim
To the Bavarian, to that insolent!
Deposed, stript bare of all thy dignity
And power, amid the taunting of thy foes.
Thou wert let drop into obscurity.—
Say not, the restoration of thy honour
Has made atonement for that first injustice.
No honest good-will was it that replaced thee;
The law of hard necessity replaced thee,
Which they had fain opposed, but that they could not.

WALLENSTEIN.

Not to their good wishes, that is certain,
Nor yet to his affection I 'm indebted
For this high office; and if I abuse it,
I shall therein abuse no confidence.

COUNTESS.

Affection! confidence!—They *needed* thee.
Necessity, impetuous remonstrant!
Who not with empty names, or shows of proxy,
Is served, who 'll have the thing and not the symbol,
Ever seeks out the greatest and the best,
And at the rudder places *him,* e'en though
She had been forced to take him from the rabble—
She, this Necessity, it was that placed thee
In this high office; it was she that gave thee
Thy letters patent of inauguration.
For, to the uttermost moment that they can,
This race still help themselves at cheapest rate
With slavish souls, with puppets! At the approach
Of extreme peril, when a hollow image
Is found a hollow image and no more,
Then falls the power into the mighty hands
Of Nature, of the spirit giant-born,
Who listens only to himself, knows nothing
Of stipulations, duties, reverences,
And, like the emancipated force of fire,
Unmaster'd scorches, ere it reaches them,
Their fine-spun webs, their artificial policy.

WALLENSTEIN.

'T is true! they saw me always as I am—
Always! I did not cheat them in the bargain.
I never held it worth my pains to hide
The bold all-grasping habit of my soul.

COUNTESS.

Nay rather—thou hast ever shown thyself
A formidable man, without restraint;
Hast exercised the full prerogatives
Of thy impetuous nature, which had been
Once granted to thee. Therefore, Duke, not *thou,*
Who hast still remain'd consistent with thyself,
But *they* are in the wrong, who fearing thee,
Entrusted such a power in hand they fear'd.
For, by the laws of Spirit, in the right
Is every individual character
That acts in strict consistence with itself.
Self-contradiction is the only wrong.
Wert thou another being, then, when thou
Eight years ago pursuedst thy march with fire
And sword, and desolation, through the Circles
Of Germany, the universal scourge,
Didst mock all ordinances of the empire,
The fearful rights of strength alone exertedst,
Trampledst to earth each rank, each magistracy,
All to extend thy Sultan's domination?
Then was the time to break thee in, to curb
Thy haughty will, to teach thee ordinance.
But no, the Emperor felt no touch of conscience:
What served him pleased him, and without a murmur
He stamp'd his broad seal on these lawless deeds.
What at that time was right, because thou didst it
For him, to day is all at once become
Opprobrious, foul, because it is directed
Against him.— O most flimsy superstition!

WALLENSTEIN (*rising*).

I never saw it in this light before,
'T is even so. The Emperor perpetrated
Deeds through my arm, deeds most unorderly.
And even this prince's mantle, which I wear,
I owe to what were services to him,
But most high misdemeanours 'gainst the empire.

COUNTESS.

Then betwixt thee and him (confess it Friedland!)
The point can be no more of right and duty,
Only of power and the opportunity.
That opportunity, lo! it comes yonder
Approaching with swift steeds; then with a swing
Throw thyself up into the chariot-seat,
Seize with firm hand the reins, ere thy opponent
Anticipate thee, and himself make conquest
Of the now empty seat. The moment comes;
It is already here, when thou must write
The absolute total of thy life's vast sum.
The constellations stand victorious o'er thee,
The planets shoot good fortune in fair junctions,
And tell thee, «Now 's the time!» The starry courses
Hast thou thy life-long measured to no purpose?
The quadrant and the circle, were they playthings?
[*Pointing to the different objects in the room.*

The zodiacs, the rolling orbs of heaven,
Hast pictured on these walls, and all around thee
In dumb, foreboding symbols hast thou placed
These seven presiding Lords of Destiny—
For toys? Is all this preparation nothing?
Is there no marrow in this hollow art,
That even to thyself it doth avail
Nothing, and has no influence over thee
In the great moment of decision?——

WALLENSTEIN (*during this last speech walks up and down with inward struggles, labouring with passion; stops suddenly, stands still, then interrupting the Countess*).

Send Wrangel to me—I will instantly
Dispatch three couriers——

ILLO (*hurrying out*).

God in heaven be praised!

WALLENSTEIN.

It is *his* evil genius and *mine*.
Our evil genius! It chastises *him*
Through me, the instrument of his ambition;
And I expect no less, than that Revenge
E'en now is whetting for *my* breast the poniard.
Who sows the serpent's teeth, let him not hope
To reap a joyous harvest. Every crime
Has, in the moment of its perpetration,
Its own avenging angel—dark misgiving,
An ominous sinking at the inmost heart.
He can no longer trust me—Then no longer
Can I retreat—so come that which must come.—
Still destiny preserves its due relations,
The heart within us is its absolute
Vicegerent.

[*To* TERTSKY.

Go, conduct you Gustave Wrangel
To my state-cabinet.—Myself will speak to
The couriers.—And dispatch immediately
A servant for Octavio Piccolomini.

[*To the* COUNTESS, *who cannot conceal her triumph.*

No exultation! woman, triumph not!
For jealous are the Powers of Destiny.
Joy premature, and shouts ere victory,
Encroach upon their rights and privileges.
We sow the seed, and they the growth determine.

[*While he is making his exit the curtain drops.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.

Scene, as in the preceding Act.

WALLENSTEIN, OCTAVIO PICCOLOMINI.

WALLENSTEIN (*coming forward in conversation*).

He sends me word from Linz, that he lies sick;
But I have sure intelligence, that he
Secretes himself at Frauenberg with Galas.
Secure them both, and send them to me hither.
Remember, thou takest on thee the command
Of those same Spanish regiments,—constantly
Make preparation, and be never ready;
And if they urge thee to draw out against me,
Still answer YES, and stand as thou wert fetter'd.
I know, that it is doing thee a service
To keep thee out of action in this business.
Thou lovest to linger on in fair appearances;
Steps of extremity are not thy province,
Therefore have I sought out this part for thee.
Thou wilt this time be of most service to me
By thy inertness. The mean time, if fortune
Declare itself on my side, thou wilt know
What is to do.

Enter MAX. PICCOLOMINI.

Now go, Octavio.
This night must thou be off, take my own horses:
Him here I keep with me—make short farewell—
Trust me, I think we all shall meet again
In joy and thriving fortunes.

OCTAVIO (*to his son*).

I shall see you
Yet ere I go.

SCENE II.

WALLENSTEIN, MAX. PICCOLOMINI.

MAX. (*advances to him*).

My General!

WALLENSTEIN.

That am I no longer, if
Thou stylest thyself the Emperor's officer.

MAX.

Then thou wilt leave the army, General?

WALLENSTEIN.

I have renounced the service of the Emperor.

MAX.

And thou wilt leave the army?

WALLENSTEIN.

Rather hope I
To bind it nearer still and faster to me.

[*He seats himself.*

Yes, Max., I have delay'd to open it to thee,
Even till the hour of acting 'gins to strike.
Youth's fortunate feeling doth seize easily
The absolute right, yea, and a joy it is
To exercise the single apprehension
Where the sums square in proof;
But where it happens, that of two sure evils
One must be taken, where the heart not wholly
Brings itself back from out the strife of duties,
There 't is a blessing to have no election,
And blank necessity is grace and favour.
—This is now present: do not look behind thee,—
It can no more avail thee. Look thou forwards!
Think not! judge not! prepare thyself to act!
The Court—it hath determined on my ruin,
Therefore I will to be beforehand with them.
We 'll join the Swedes—right gallant fellows are they,
And our good friends.

[*He stops himself, expecting* PICCOLOMINI's *answer.*

I have ta'en thee by surprise. Answer me not.
I grant thee time to recollect thyself.

[*He rises, and retires at the back of the stage.* MAX. *remains for a long time motionless, in a trance of excessive anguish. At his first motion* WALLENSTEIN *returns, and places himself before him.*

MAX.

My General, this day thou makest me
Of age to speak in my own right and person,
For till this day I have been spared the trouble
To find out my own road. Thee have I follow'd

With most implicit unconditional faith,
Sure of the right path if I follow'd thee.
To-day, for the first time, dost thou refer
Me to myself, and forcest me to make
Election between thee and my own heart.

WALLENSTEIN.

Soft cradled thee thy Fortune till to day;
Thy duties thou couldst exercise in sport,
Indulge all lovely instincts, act for ever
With undivided heart. It can remain
No longer thus. Like enemies, the roads
Start from each other. Duties strive with duties.
Thou must needs chuse thy party in the war
Which is now kindling 'twixt thy friend and him
Who is thy Emperor.

MAX.

War! is that the name?
War is as frightful as heaven's pestilence.
Yet it is good, is it heaven's will as that is.
Is that a good war, which against the Emperor
Thou wagest with the Emperor's own army?
O God of heaven! what a change is this.
Beseems it me to offer such persuasion
To thee, who like the fix'd star of the pole
Wert all I gazed at on life's trackless ocean?
O! what a rent thou makest in my heart!
The ingrain'd instinct of old reverence,
The holy habit of obediency,
Must I pluck live asunder from thy name?
Nay, do not turn thy countenance upon me—
It always was as a god looking at me!
Duke Wallenstein, its power is not departed:
The senses still are in thy bonds, although,
Bleeding, the soul hath freed itself.

WALLENSTEIN.

Max. hear me.

MAX.

O! do it not, I pray thee, do it not!
There is a pure and noble soul within thee,
Knows not of this unblest, unlucky doing.
Thy will is chaste, it is thy fancy only
Which hath polluted thee—and innocence,
It will not let itself be driven away
From that world-awing aspect. Thou wilt not,
Thou canst not, end in this. It would reduce
All human creatures to disloyalty
Against the nobleness of their own nature.
'T will justify the vulgar misbelief,
Which holdeth nothing noble in free will,
And trusts itself to impotence alone,
Made powerful only in an unknown power.

WALLENSTEIN.

The world will judge me sternly, I expect it.
Already have I said to my own self
All thou canst say to me. Who but avoids
The extreme, can he by going round avoid it?
But here there is no choice. Yes—I must use
Or suffer violence—so stands the case,
There remains nothing possible but that.

MAX.

O that is never possible for thee!
'T is the last desperate resource of those
Cheap souls, to whom their honour, their good name
Is their poor *saving*, their last worthless *keep*,
Which having staked and lost, they stake themselves
In the mad rage of gaming. Thou art rich,
And glorious; with an unpolluted heart
Thou canst make conquest of whate'er seems highest!
But he, who once hath acted infamy,
Does nothing more in this world.

WALLENSTEIN (*grasps his hand*).

Calmly, Max.!
Much that is great and excellent will we
Perform together yet. And if we only
Stand on the height with dignity, 't is soon
Forgotten, Max., by what road we ascended.
Believe me, many a crown shines spotless now,
That yet was deeply sullied in the winning.
To the evil spirit doth the earth belong,
Not to the good. All, that the powers divine
Send from above, are universal blessings:
Their light rejoices us, their air refreshes,
But never yet was man enrich'd by them:
In their eternal realm no *property*
Is to be struggled for—all there is general.
The jewel, the all-valued gold we win
From the deceiving Powers, depraved in nature,
That dwell beneath the day and blessed sun-light.
Not without sacrifices are they render'd
Propitious, and there lives no soul on earth
That e'er retired unsullied from their service.

MAX.

Whate'er is human, to the human being
Do I allow—and to the vehement
And striving spirit readily I pardon
The excess of action; but to thee, my General!
Above *all* others make I large concession.
For thou must move a world, and be the master—
He kills thee, who condemns thee to inaction.
So be it then! maintain thee in thy post
By violence. Resist the Emperor,
And if it must be, force with force repel:
I will not praise it, yet I can forgive it.
But not—not to the *traitor*—yes!—the word
Is spoken out——
Not to the traitor can I yield a pardon.
That is no mere excess! that is no error
Of human nature—that is wholly different,
O that is black, black as the pit of hell!

[WALLENSTEIN *betrays a sudden agitation.*

Thou canst not hear it *named*, and wilt thou *do* it?
O turn back to thy duty. That thou canst,
I hold it certain. Send me to Vienna:
I 'll make thy peace for thee with the Emperor.
He knows thee not. But I do know thee. He
Shall see thee, Duke! with my unclouded eye,
And I bring back his confidence to thee.

WALLENSTEIN.

It is too late. Thou knowest not what has happen'd.

MAX.

Were it too late, and were things gone so far,
That a crime only could prevent thy fall,
Then—fall! fall honourably, even as thou stood'st.
Lose the command. Go from the stage of war.
Thou canst with splendour do it—do it too
With innocence. Thou hast lived much for others,
At length live thou for thy own self. I follow thee.
My destiny I never part from thine.

WALLENSTEIN.

It is too late! Even now, while thou art losing
Thy words, one after the other are the mile-stones
Left fast behind by my post couriers,

Who bear the order on to Prague and Egra.

[MAX. *stands as convulsed, with a gesture and countenance expressing the most intense anguish.*

Yield thyself to it. We act as we are forced.
I cannot give assent to my own shame
And ruin. *Thou*—no—thou canst not forsake me!
So let us do, what must be done, with dignity,
With a firm step. What am I doing worse
Than did famed Cæsar at the Rubicon,
When he the legions led against his country,
The which his country had deliver'd to him?
Had he thrown down the sword, he had been lost,
As I were, if I but disarm'd myself.
I trace out something in me of his spirit;
Give me his luck, *that other thing* I 'll bear.

[MAX. *quits him abrupty.* WALLENSTEIN, *startled and overpowered, continues looking after him, and is still in this posture when* TERTSKY *enters.*

SCENE III.

WALLENSTEIN, TERTSKY.

TERTSKY.

Max. Piccolomini just left you?

WALLENSTEIN.

Where is Wrangel?

TERTSKY.

He is already gone.

WALLENSTEIN.

In such a hurry?

TERTSKY.

It is as if the earth had swallow'd him.
He had scarce left thee, when I went to seek him.
I wish'd some words with him—but he was gone.
How, when, and where, could no one tell me. Nay,
I half believe it was the devil himself;
A human creature could not so at once
Have vanish'd.

ILLO (*enters*).

Is it true that thou wilt send
Octavio?

TERTSKY.

How, Octavio! Whither send him!

WALLENSTEIN.

He goes to Frauenberg, and will lead hither
The Spanish and Italian regiments.

ILLO.

No!
Nay, Heaven forbid?

WALLENSTEIN.

And why should Heaven forbid?

ILLO.

Him!—that deceiver! Wouldst thou trust to him
The soldiery? Him wilt thou let slip from thee,
Now, in the very instant that decides us——

TERTSKY.

Thou wilt not do this!—No! I pray thee, no!

WALLENSTEIN.

Ye are whimsical.

ILLO.

O but for this time, Duke,
Yield to our warning! Let him not depart.

WALLENSTEIN.

And why should I not trust him only this time,
Who have always trusted him? What, then, has happen'd,
That I should lose my good opinion of him?
In complaisance to your whims, not my own,
I must, forsooth, give up a rooted judgment.
Think not I am a woman. Having trusted him
E'en till to-day, to-day too will I trust him.

TERTSKY.

Must it be he—he only? Send another.

WALLENSTEIN.

It must be he, whom I myself have chosen;
He is well fitted for the business. Therefore
I gave it him.

ILLO.

Because he 's an Italian—
Therefore is he well fitted for the business!

WALLENSTEIN.

I know you love them not—nor sire nor son—
Because that I esteem them, love them—visibly
Esteem them, love them more than you and others,
E'en as they merit. Therefore are they eye-blights,
Thorns in your foot-path. But your jealousies;
In what affect they me or my concerns?
Are they the worse to *me* because you hate them?
Love or hate one another as you will,
I leave to each man his own moods and likings;
Yet know the worth of each of you to me.

ILLO.

Von Questenberg, while he was here, was always
Lurking about with this Octavio.

WALLENSTEIN.

It happen'd with my knowledge and permission.

ILLO.

I know that secret messengers came to him
From Galas——

WALLENSTEIN.

That 's not true.

ILLO.

O thou art blind,
With thy deep-seeing eyes!

WALLENSTEIN.

Thou wilt not shake
My faith for me—my faith, which founds itself
On the profoundest science. If 't is false,
Then the whole science of the stars is false;
For know, I have a pledge from Fate itself,
That he is the most faithful of my friends.

ILLO.

Hast thou a pledge, that this pledge is not false?

WALLENSTEIN.

There exist moments in the life of man,
When he is nearer the great Soul of the world
Than is man's custom, and possesses freely
The power of questioning his destiny:
And such a moment 't was, when in the night
Before the action in the plains of Lützen,
Leaning against a tree, thoughts crowding thoughts,
I look'd out far upon the ominous plain.
My whole life, past and future, in this moment
Before my mind's eye glided in procession,
And to the destiny of the next morning
The spirit, fill'd with anxious presentiment,
Did knit the most removed futurity.
Then said I also to myself, « So many
Dost thou command. They follow all thy stars,
And as on some great number set their All
Upon thy single head, and only man

The vessel of thy fortune. Yet a day
Will come, when Destiny shall once more scatter
All these in many a several direction:
Few be they who will stand out faithful to thee.»
I yearn'd to know which one was faithfullest
Of all, this camp included. Great Destiny,
Give me a sign! And he shall be the man,
Who, on the approaching morning, comes the first
To meet me with a token of his love:
And thinking this, I fell into a slumber.
Then midmost in the battle was I led
In spirit. Great the pressure and the tumult!
Then was my horse kill'd under me: I sank;
And over me away all unconcernedly,
Drove horse and rider—and thus trod to pieces
I lay, and panted like a dying man;
Then seized me suddenly a saviour arm:
It was Octavio's—I awoke at once,
'T was broad day, and *Octavio* stood before me.
« My brother,» said he, « do not ride to-day
The dapple, as you 're wont; but mount the horse
Which I have chosen for thee. Do it, brother!
In love to me. A strong dream warn'd me so.»
It was the swiftness of this horse that snatch'd me
From the hot pursuit of Bannier's dragoons.
My cousin rode the dapple on that day,
And never more saw I or horse or rider.

ILLO.

That was a chance.

WALLENSTEIN (*significantly*).

There 's no such thing as chance.
In brief, 't is sign'd and seal'd that this Octavio
Is my good angel—and now no word more.

[*He is retiring.*

TERTSKY.

This is my comfort—Max. remains our hostage.

ILLO.

And he shall never stir from here alive.

WALLENSTEIN (*stops and turns himself round*).

Are ye not like the women, who for ever
Only recur to their first word, although
One had been talking reason by the hour!
Know, that the human being's thoughts and deeds
Are not, like ocean billows, blindly moved.
The inner world, his microcosmus, is
The deep shaft, out of which they spring eternally.
They grow by certain laws, like the tree's fruit—
No juggling chance can metamorphose them.
Have I the human *kernel* first examined?
Then I know, too, the future will and action.

SCENE IV.

SCENE—*A Chamber in* PICCOLOMINI'S *Dwelling-House.*

OCTAVIO PICCOLOMINI, ISOLANI, *entering.*

ISOLANI.

Here am I—Well! who comes yet of the others?

OCTAVIO (*with an air of mystery*).

But, first, a word with you, Count Isolani.

ISOLANI (*assuming the same air of mystery*).

Will it explode, ha?—Is the Duke about
To make the attempt? In me, friend, you may place
Full confidence.—Nay, put me to the proof.

OCTAVIO.

That may happen.

ISOLANI.

Noble brother, I am
Not one of those men who in words are valiant,
And when it comes to action skulk away.
The Duke has acted towards me as a friend.
God knows it is so; and I owe him all——
He may rely on my fidelity.

OCTAVIO.

That will be seen hereafter.

ISOLANI.

Be on your guard,
All think not as I think; and there are many
Who still hold with the Court—yes, and they say
That those stolen signatures bind them to nothing.

OCTAVIO.

I am rejoiced to hear it.

ISOLANI.

You rejoice!

OCTAVIO.

That the Emperor has yet such gallant servants,
And loving friends.

ISOLANI.

Nay, jeer not, I entreat you.
They are no such worthless fellows, I assure you.

OCTAVIO.

I am assured already. God forbid
That I should jest!—In very serious earnest,
I am rejoiced to see an honest cause
So strong.

ISOLANI.

The Devil!—what!—why, what means this?
Are you not, then——For what, then, am I here?

OCTAVIO.

That you may make full declaration, whether
You will be call'd the friend or enemy
Of the Emperor.

ISOLANI (*with an air of defiance*).

That declaration, friend,
I'll make to him in whom a right is placed
To put that question to me.

OCTAVIO.

Whether Count,
That right is mine, this paper may instruct you.

ISOLANI (*stammering*).

Why,—why—what! this is the Emperor's hand and seal!

[*Reads.*

« Whereas, the officers collectively
Throughout our army will obey the orders
Of the Lieutenant-general Piccolomini.
As from our ourselves.»——*Hem!*—Yes! so!—Yes! yes!—
I—I give you joy, Lieutenant-general!

OCTAVIO.

And you submit you to the order?

ISOLANI.

I——
But you have taken me so by surprise—
Time for reflection one *must* have——

OCTAVIO.

Two minutes.

ISOLANI.

My God! But then the case is——

OCTAVIO.

Plain and simple.
You must declare you, whether you determine
To act a treason 'gainst your Lord and Sovereign,
Or whether you will serve him faithfully.

ISOLANI.

Treason!—My God!—But who talks then of treason?

OCTAVIO.

That is the case. The Prince-duke is a traitor—
Means to lead over to the enemy
The Emperor's army.—Now, Count!—brief and full—
Say, will you break your oath to the Emperor?
Sell yourself to the enemy?—Say, will you?

ISOLANI.

What mean you? I—I break my oath, d' ye say,
To his Imperial Majesty?
Did I say so!—When, when have I said that?

OCTAVIO.

You have not said it yet—not yet. This instant
I wait to hear, Count, whether you *will* say it.

ISOLANI.

Aye! that delights me now, that you yourself
Bear witness for me that I never said so.

OCTAVIO.

And you renounce the Duke then?

ISOLANI.

If he's planning
Treason—why, treason breaks all bonds asunder.

OCTAVIO.

And are determined, too, to fight against him?

ISOLANI.

He has done me service—but if he's a villain,
Perdition seize him!—All scores are rubb'd off.

OCTAVIO.

I am rejoiced that you're so well disposed.
This night break off in the utmost secresy
With all the light-arm'd troops—it must appear
As came the order from the Duke himself.
At Frauenberg's the place of rendezvous;
There will Count Galas give you further orders.

ISOLANI.

It shall be done. But you'll remember me
With the Emperor—how well-disposed you found me.

OCTAVIO.

I will not fail to mention it honourably.

[*Exit* ISOLANI. *A* SERVANT *enters.*

What, Colonel Butler!—Show him up.

ISOLANI (*returning*).

Forgive me too my bearish ways, old father!
Lord God! how should I know, then, what a great
Person I had before me.

OCTAVIO.

No excuses!

ISOLANI.

I am a merry lad, and if at time
A rash word might escape me 'gainst the court
Amidst my wine—You know no harm was meant.

[*Exit.*

OCTAVIO.

You need not be uneasy on that score.
That has succeeded. Fortune favour us
With all the others only but as much!

SCENE V.

OCTAVIO PICCOLOMINI, BUTLER.

BUTLER.

At your command, Lieutenant-general.

OCTAVIO.

Welcome, as honour'd friend and visitor.

BUTLER.

You do me too much honour.

OCTAVIO (*after both have seated themselves*).

You have not
Return'd the advances which I made you yesterday—
Misunderstood them, as mere empty forms.
That wish proceeded from my heart—I was
In earnest with you—for 'tis now a time
In which the honest should unite most closely.

BUTLER.

'T is only the like-minded can unite.

OCTAVIO.

True! and I name all honest men like-minded.
I never charge a man but with those acts
To which his character deliberately
Impels him; for alas! the violence
Of blind misunderstandings often thrusts
The very best of us from the right track.
You came through Frauenberg. Did the Count Galas
Say nothing to you? Tell me. He 's my friend.

BUTLER.

His words were lost on *me.*

OCTAVIO.

It grieves me sorely,
To hear it: for his counsel was most wise.
I had myself the like to offer.

BUTLER.

Spare
Yourself the trouble—me th' embarrassment,
To have deserved so ill your good opinion.

OCTAVIO.

The time is precious—let us talk openly.
You know how matters stand here. Wallenstein
Meditates treason—I can tell you further—
He has committed treason; but few hours
Have past, since he a covenant concluded
With the enemy. The messengers are now
Full on their way to Egra and to Prague.
To-morrow he intends to lead us over
To the enemy. But he deceives himself;
For Prudence wakes—the Emperor has still
Many and faithful friends here, and they stand
In closest union, mighty though unseen.
This manifesto sentences the Duke—
Recals the obedience of the army from him,
And summons all the loyal, all the honest,
To join and recognize in me their leader.
Chuse—will you share with us an honest cause?
Or with the evil share an evil lot.

BUTLER (*rises*).

His lot is mine.

OCTAVIO.

Is that your last resolve?

BUTLER.

It is.

OCTAVIO.

Nay, but bethink you, Colonel Butler!
As yet you have time. Within my faithful breast
That rashly utter'd word remains interr'd.
Recal it, Butler! chuse a better party:
You have not chosen the right one.

BUTLER (*going*).

Any other
Commands for me, Lieutenant-general?

OCTAVIO.

See your white hairs! Recal that word!

BUTLER.

Farewell!

OCTAVIO.

What! Would you draw this good and gallant sword
In such a cause? Into a curse would you
Transform the gratitude which you have earn'd
By forty years' fidelity from Austria?

BUTLER (*laughing with bitterness*).

Gratitude from the House of Austria. [*He is going.*

OCTAVIO (*permits him to go as far as the door, then calls after him*).

Butler!

BUTLER.

What wish you?

OCTAVIO.

How was 't with the Count?

BUTLER.

Count? what?

OCTAVIO (*coldly*).

The title that you wish'd, I mean.

BUTLER (*starts in sudden passion*).

Hell and damnation!

OCTAVIO (*coldly*).

You petition'd for it—
And your petition was repell'd—Was it so?

BUTLER.

Your insolent scoff shall not go by unpunish'd.
Draw!

OCTAVIO.

Nay! your sword to 'ts sheath! and tell me calmly,
How all that happen'd. I will not refuse you
Your satisfaction afterwards.—Calmly, Butler!

BUTLER.

Be the whole world acquainted with the weakness
For which I never can forgive myself.
Lieutenant-general! Yes—I have ambition.
Ne'er was I able to endure contempt.
It stung me to the quick, that birth and title
Should have more weight than merit has in the army.
I would fain not be meaner than my equal,
So in an evil hour I let myself
Be tempted to that measure—It was folly!
But yet so hard a penance it deserved not.
It might have been refused; but wherefore barb
And venom the refusal with contempt?
Why dash to earth and crush with heaviest scorn
The grey-hair'd man, the faithful veteran?
Why to the baseness of his parentage
Refer him with such cruel roughness, only
Because he had a weak hour and forgot himself?
But nature gives a sting e'en to the worm
Which wanton Power treads on in sport and insult.

OCTAVIO.

You must have been calumniated. Guess you
The enemy, who did you this ill service?

BUTLER.

Be 't who it will—a most low-hearted scoundrel,
Some vile court-minion must it be, some Spaniard,
Some young squire of some ancient family,
In whose light I may stand, some envious knave,
Stung to his soul by my fair self-earn'd honours!

OCTAVIO.

But tell me! Did the Duke approve that measure?

BUTLER.

Himself impell'd me to it, used his interest
In my behalf with all the warmth of friendship.

OCTAVIO.

Ay? are you sure of that?

BUTLER.

I read the letter.

OCTAVIO.

And so did I—but the contents were different.

[BUTLER *is suddenly struck.*

By chance I 'm in possession of that letter—
Can leave it to your own eyes to convince you.

[*He gives him the letter.*

BUTLER.

Ha! what is this?

OCTAVIO.

I fear me, Colonel Butler,
An infamous game have they been playing with you.
The Duke, you say, impell'd you to this measure?
Now, in this letter talks he in contempt
Concerning you, counsels the minister
To give sound chastisement to your conceit,
For so he calls it.

[BUTLER *reads through the letter, his knees tremble, he seizes a chair, and sinks down in it.*

You have no enemy, no persecutor;
There 's no one wishes ill to you. Ascribe
The insult you received to the Duke only.
His aim is clear and palpable. He wish'd
To tear you from your Emperor—he hoped
To gain from your revenge what he well knew
(What your long-tried fidelity convinced him)
He ne'er could dare expect from your calm reason.
A blind tool would he make you, in contempt
Use you, as means of most abandon'd ends.
He has gain'd his point. Too well has he succeeded
In luring you away from that good path
On which you had been journeying forty years!

BUTLER (*his voice trembling*).

Can e'er the Emperor's Majesty forgive me?

OCTAVIO.

More than forgive you. He would fain compensate
For that affront, and most unmerited grievance
Sustain'd by a deserving, gallant veteran.
From his free impulse he confirms the present,
Which the Duke made you for a wicked purpose.
The regiment, which you now command, is your's.

[BUTLER *attempts to rise, sinks down again. He labours inwardly with violent emotions; tries to speak, and cannot. At length he takes his sword from the belt, and offers it to* PICCOLOMINI.

OCTAVIO.

What wish you? Recollect yourself, friend.

BUTLER.

Take it.

OCTAVIO.

But to what purpose? Calm yourself.

BUTLER.

O take it!
I am no longer worthy of this sword.

OCTAVIO.

Receive it then anew from my hands—and
Wear it with honour for the right cause ever.

BUTLER.

——Perjure myself to such a gracious Sovereign!

OCTAVIO.

You 'll make amends. Quick! break off from the Duke!

BUTLER.

Break off from him!

OCTAVIO.

What now? Bethink thyself.

BUTLER (*no longer governing his emotion*).

Only break off from him? He dies! he dies!

OCTAVIO.

Come after me to Frauenberg, where now
All who are loyal, are assembling under
Counts Altringer and Galas. Many others
I 've brought to a remembrance of their duty,
This night be sure that you escape from Pilsen.

BUTLER (*strides up and down in excessive agitation, then steps up to* OCTAVIO *with resolved countenance*).

Count Piccolomini! Dare that man speak
Of honour to you, who once broke his troth.

OCTAVIO.

He, who repents so deeply of it, dares.

BUTLER.

Then leave me here, upon my word of honour!

OCTAVIO.

What 's your design?

BUTLER.

Leave me and my regiment.

OCTAVIO.

I have full confidence in you. But tell me
What are you brooding?

BUTLER.

That the deed will tell you.
Ask me no more at present. Trust to me.
Ye may trust safely. By the living God
Ye give him over, not to his good angel!
Farewell. [*Exit* BUTLER.

SERVANT (*enters with a billet*).

A stranger left it, and is gone.
The Prince-Duke's horses wait for you below.

[*Exit* SERVANT.

OCTAVIO (*reads*).

« Be sure make haste! Your faithful Isolan.»
—O that I had but left this town behind me.
To split upon a rock so near the haven!—
Away! This is no longer a safe place for me!
Where can my son be tarrying?

SCENE VI.

OCTAVIO *and* MAX. PICCOLOMINI.

MAX. *enters almost in a state of derangement from extreme agitation, his eyes roll wildly, his walk is unsteady, and he appears not to observe his father, who stands at a distance, and gazes at him with a countenance expressive of compassion. He paces with long strides through the chamber, then stands still again, and at last throws himself into a chair, staring vacantly at the object directly before him.*

OCTAVIO (*advances to him*).

I am going off, my son.

[*Receiving no answer, he takes his hand.*

My son, farewell.

MAX.

Farewell.

OCTAVIO.

Thou wilt soon follow me?

MAX.

I follow thee?
Thy way is crooked—it is not my way.

[OCTAVIO *drops his hand, and starts back.*

O, hadst thou been but simple and sincere,
Ne'er had it come to this—all had stood otherwise.
He had not done that foul and horrible deed,
The virtuous had retain'd their influence o'er him:
He had not fallen into the snares of villains.
Wherefore so like a thief, and thief's accomplice
Didst creep behind him—lurking for thy prey?
O, unblest falsehood! Mother of all evil!
Thou misery-making dæmon, it is thou
That sink'st us in perdition. Simple truth,
Sustainer of the world, had saved us all!
Father, I will not, I cannot excuse thee!
Wallenstein has deceived me—O, most foully!
But thou hast acted not much better.

OCTAVIO.

Son!
My son, ah! I forgive thy agony!

MAX. (*rises, and contemplates his father with looks of suspicion*).

Was 't possible? hadst thou the heart, my father,
Hadst thou the heart to drive it to such lengths,
With cold premeditated purpose? Thou—
Hadst thou the heart, to wish to see him guilty,
Rather than saved? Thou risest by his fall.
Octavio, 't will not please me.

OCTAVIO.

God in Heaven!

MAX.

O, woe is me! sure I have changed my nature.
How comes suspicion here—in the free soul?
Hope, confidence, belief, are gone; for all
Lied to me, all that I e'er loved or honour'd.
No! no! not all! She—she yet lives for me,
And she is true, and open as the Heavens!
Deceit is every where, hypocrisy,
Murder, and poisoning, treason, perjury:
The single holy spot is our love,
The only unprofaned in human nature.

OCTAVIO.

Max.!—we will go together. 'T will be better.

MAX.

What? ere I 've taken a last parting leave,
The very last—no never!

OCTAVIO.

Spare thyself
The pang of necessary separation.
Come with me! Come, my son!

[*Attempts to take him with him.*

MAX.

No! as sure as God lives, no!

OCTAVIO (*more urgently*).

Come with me, I command thee! I, thy father.

MAX.

Command me what is human. I stay here.

OCTAVIO.

Max.! in the Emperor's name I bid thee come.

MAX.

No Emperor has power to prescribe
Laws to the heart; and wouldst thou wish to rob me
Of the sole blessing which my fate has left me,
Her sympathy? Must then a cruel deed
Be done with cruelty? The unalterable

Shall I perform ignobly—steal away,
With stealthy coward flight forsake her? No!
She shall behold my suffering, my sore anguish,
Hear the complaints of the disparted soul,
And weep tears o'er me. Oh! the human race
Have steely souls—but she is as an angel.
From the black deadly madness of despair
Will she redeem my soul, and in soft words
Of comfort, plaining, loose this pang of death!

OCTAVIO.

Thou wilt not tear thyself away; thou canst not.
O, come, my son! I bid thee save thy virtue.

MAX.

Squander not thou thy words in vain.
The heart I follow, for I dare trust to it.

OCTAVIO (*trembling, and losing all self-command*).

Max.! Max.! if that most damned thing could be,
If thou—my son—my own blood—(dare I *think* it?)
Do sell thyself to him, the infamous,
Do stamp this brand upon our noble house,
Then shall the world behold the horrible deed
And in unnatural combat shall the steel
Of the son trickle with the father's blood.

MAX.

O hadst thou always better thought of men,
Thou hadst then acted better. Curst suspicion!
Unholy miserable doubt! To him
Nothing on earth remains unwrench'd and firm,
Who has no faith.

OCTAVIO.

And if I trust thy heart,
Will it be always in thy power to follow it?

MAX.

The heart's voice *thou* hast not o'erpower'd—as little
Will Wallenstein be able to o'erpower it.

OCTAVIO.

O, Max.! I see thee never more again!

MAX.

Unworthy of thee wilt thou never see me.

OCTAVIO.

I go to Frauenberg—the Pappenheimers
I leave thee here, the Lothrings too; Toskana
And Tiefenbach remain here to protect thee.
They love thee, and are faithful to their oath,
And will far rather fall in gallant contest
Than leave their rightful leader, and their honour.

MAX.

Rely on this, I either leave my life
In the struggle, or conduct them out of Pilsen.

OCTAVIO.

Farewell, my son!

MAX.

Farewell!

OCTAVIO.

How? not one look
Of filial love? No grasp of the hand at parting?
It is a bloody war to which we are going,
And the event uncertain and in darkness.
So used we not to part—it was not so!
Is it then true? I have a son no longer?

[MAX. *falls into his arms, they hold each other for a long time in a speechless embrace, then go away at different sides.*

(*The Curtain drops*).

The Death of Wallenstein;

A TRAGEDY, IN FIVE ACTS.

PREFACE.

THE two Dramas, PICCOLOMINI, or the first part of WALLENSTEIN, and WALLENSTEIN, are introduced in the original manuscript by a Prelude in one Act, entitled WALLENSTEIN'S CAMP. This is written in rhyme, and in nine-syllable verse, in the same *lilting* metre (if that expression may be permitted) with the second Eclogue of Spencer's Shepherd's Calendar.

This Prelude possesses a sort of broad humour, and is not deficient in character; but to have translated it into prose, or into any other metre than that of the original, would have given a false idea both of its style and purport; to have translated it into the same metre would have been incompatible with a faithful adherence to the sense of the German, from the comparative poverty of our language in rhymes; and it would have been unadvisable, from the incongruity of those lax verses with the present taste of the English Public. Schiller's intention seems to have been merely to have prepared his reader for the Tragedies by a lively picture of the laxity of discipline, and the mutinous dispositions of Wallenstein's soldiery. It is not necessary as a preliminary explanation. For these reasons it has been thought expedient not to translate it.

The admirers of Schiller, who have abstracted their idea of that author from the Robbers, and the Cabal and Love, plays in which the main interest is produced by the excitement of curiosity, and in which the curiosity is excited by terrible and extraordinary incident, will not have perused without some portion of disappointment the Dramas, which it has been my employment to translate. They should, however, reflect that these are Historical Dramas, taken from a popular German History; that we must therefore judge of them in some measure with the feelings of Germans; or by analogy, with the interest excited in us by similar Dramas in our own language. Few, I trust, would be rash or ignorant enough to compare Schiller with Shakspeare; yet, merely as illustration, I would say that we should proceed to the perusal of Wallenstein, not from Lear or Othello, but from Richard the Second, or the three parts of Henry the Sixth. We scarcely expect rapidity in an Historical Drama; and many prolix speeches are pardoned from characters, whose names and actions have formed the most amusing tales of our early life. On the other hand, there exist in these plays more individual beauties,

more passages whose excellence will bear reflection, than in the former productions of Schiller. The description of the Astrological Tower, and the reflections of the Young Lover, which follow it, form in the original a fine poem; and my translation must have been wretched indeed, if it can have wholly overclouded the beautics of the Scene in the first Act of the first Play between Questenberg, Max., and Octavio Piccolomini. If we except the Scene of the setting sun in the Robbers, I know of no part in Schiller's Plays which equals the whole of the first Scene of the fifth Act of the concluding Play. It would be unbecoming in me to be more diffuse on this subject. A Translator stands connected with the original Author by a certain law of subordination, which makes it more decorous to point out excellencies than defects: indeed he is not likely to be a fair judge of either. The pleasure or disgust from his own labour will mingle with the feelings that arise from an after-view of the original. Even in the first perusal of a work in any foreign language which we understand, we are apt to attribute to it more excellence than it really possesses from our own pleasureable sense of difficulty overcome without effort. Translation of poetry into poetry is difficult, because the Translator must give a brilliancy to his language without that warmth of original conception, from which such brilliancy would follow of its own accord. But the Translator of a living Author is encumbered with additional inconveniencies. If he render his original faithfully, as to the *sense* of each passage, he must, necessarily, destroy a considerable portion of the *spirit;* if he endeavour to give a work executed according to laws of *compensation,* he subjects himself to imputations of vanity, or misrepresentation. I have thought it my duty to remain bound by the sense of my original, with as few exceptions as the nature of the languages rendered possible.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

WALLENSTEIN, *Duke of Friedland, Generalissimo of the Imperial Forces in the Thirty-years' War.*
DUCHESS OF FRIEDLAND, *Wife of Wallenstein.*
THEKLA, *her Daughter, Princess of Friedland.*
The COUNTESS TERTSKY, *Sister of the Duchess.*
LADY NEUBRUNN.
OCTAVIO PICCOLOMINI, *Lieutenant General.*
MAX. PICCOLOMINI, *his Son, Colonel of a Regiment of Cuirassiers.*
COUNT TERTSKY, *the Commander of several Regiments, and Brother-in-law of Wallenstein.*
ILLO, *Field Marshal, Wallenstein's Confidant.*
BUTLER, *an Irishman, Commander of a Regiment of Dragoons.*
GORDON, *Governor of Egra.*
MAJOR GERALDIN.
CAPTAIN DEVEREUX.
——— MACDONALD.
NEUMANN, *Captain of Cavalry, Aide-de-camp to Tertsky.*
SWEDISH CAPTAIN.
SENI.
BURGOMASTER *of Egra.*
ANSPESSADE *of the Cuirassiers.*
GROOM OF THE CHAMBER, A PAGE, } *Belonging to the Duke.*
CUIRASSIERS, DRAGOONS, SERVANTS.

THE DEATH OF WALLENSTEIN.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

SCENE—*A Chamber in the House of the Duchess of Friedland.*

COUNTESS TERTSKY, THEKLA, LADY NEUBRUNN *(the two latter sit at the same table at work).*

COUNTESS *(watching them from the opposite side).*

So you have nothing to ask me—nothing?
I have been waiting for a word from you.
And could you then endure in all this time
Not once to speak his name?

[THEKLA *remaining silent, the* COUNTESS *rises and advances to her.*

Why, how comes this?
Perhaps I am already grown superfluous,
And other ways exist, besides through me?
Confess it to me, Thekla: have you seen him?

THEKLA.

To-day and yesterday I have not seen him.

COUNTESS.

And not heard from him, either? Come, be open.

THEKLA.

No syllable.

COUNTESS.

And still you are so calm?

THEKLA.

I am.

COUNTESS.

May 't please you, leave us, Lady Neubrunn.

[*Exit* LADY NEUBRUNN.

SCENE II.

The COUNTESS, THEKLA.

COUNTESS.

It does not please me, Princess, that he holds
Himself so *still*, exactly at *this* time.

THEKLA.

Exactly at *this* time?

COUNTESS.

He now knows all:
'T were now the moment to declare himself.

THEKLA.

If I 'm to understand you, speak less darkly.

COUNTESS.

'T was for that purpose that I bade her leave us.
Thekla, you are no more a child. Your heart
Is now no more in nonage: for you love,
And boldness dwells with love—that *you* have proved.
Your nature moulds itself upon your father's
More than your mother's spirit. Therefore may you
Hear, what were too much for her fortitude.

THEKLA.

Enough: no further preface, I entreat you.
At once, out with it! Be it what it may,
It is not possible that it should torture me
More than this introduction. What have you
To say to me? Tell me the whole, and briefly!

COUNTESS.

You 'll not be frighten'd——

THEKLA.

Name it, I entreat you.

COUNTESS.

It lies within your power to do your father
A weighty service——

THEKLA.

Lies within *my* power?

COUNTESS.

Max. Piccolomini loves you. You can link him
Indissolubly to your father.

THEKLA.

I?
What need of me for that? And is he not
Already link'd to him?

COUNTESS.

He was.

THEKLA.

And wherefore
Should he not be so now—not be so always?

COUNTESS.

He cleaves to the Emperor too.

THEKLA.

Not more than duty
And honour may demand of him.

COUNTESS.

We ask
Proofs of his love, and not proofs of his honour.
Duty and honour!
Those are ambiguous words with many meanings.
You should interpret them for him: his love
Should be the sole definer of his honour.

THEKLA.

How?

COUNTESS.

The Emperor or you must he renounce.

THEKLA.

He will accompany my father gladly
In his retirement. From himself you heard,
How much he wish'd to lay aside the sword.

COUNTESS.

He must *not* lay the sword aside, we mean;
He must unsheath it in your father's cause.

THEKLA.

He 'll spend with gladness and alacrity
His life, his heart's-blood in my father's cause,
If shame or injury be intended him.

COUNTESS.

You will not understand me. Well, hear then:—
Your father has fallen off from the Emperor,
And is about to join the enemy
With the whole soldiery——

THEKLA.

Alas, my mother!

COUNTESS.

There needs a great example to draw on
The army after him. The Piccolomini
Possess the love and reverence of the troops;
They govern all opinions, and wherever
They lead the way, none hesitate to follow.
The son secures the father to our interests—
You 've much in your hands at this moment.

THEKLA.

Ah,
My miserable mother! what a death-stroke
Awaits thee!—No! she never will survive it.

COUNTESS.

She will accommodate her soul to that
Which is and must be. I do know your mother.
The far-off future weighs upon her heart
With torture of anxiety; but is it
Unalterably, actually present,
She soon resigns herself, and bears it calmly.

THEKLA.

O my foreboding bosom! Even now,
E'en now 't is here, that icy hand of horror!
And my young hope lies shuddering in its grasp;
I knew it well—no sooner had I enter'd,
An heavy ominous presentiment
Reveal'd to me, that spirits of death were hovering
Over my happy fortune. But why think I
First of myself? My mother! O my mother!

COUNTESS.

Calm yourself! Break not out in vain lamenting!
Preserve you for your father the firm friend,
And for yourself the lover, all will yet
Prove good and fortunate.

THEKLA.

Prove good! What good?
Must we not part?—part ne'er to meet again?

COUNTESS.

He parts not from you! He can not part from you.

THEKLA.

Alas for his sore anguish! It will rend
His heart asunder.

COUNTESS.

If indeed he loves you,
His resolution will be speedily taken.

THEKLA.

His resolution will be speedily taken—
O do not doubt of that! A resolution!
Does there remain one to be taken?

COUNTESS.

Hush!
Collect yourself! I hear your mother coming.

THEKLA.

How shall I bear to see her?

COUNTESS.

Collect yourself.

SCENE III.

To them enter the DUCHESS.

DUCHESS (*to the* COUNTESS).

Who was here sister? I heard some one talking,
And passionately too.

COUNTESS.

Nay! There was no one.

DUCHESS.

I am grown so timorous, every trifling noise
Scatters my spirits, and announces to me
The footstep of some messenger of evil.
And you can tell me, sister, what the event is?
Will he agree to do the Emperor's pleasure,
And send the horse-regiments to the Cardinal?
Tell me, has he dismiss'd Von Questenberg
With a favourable answer?

COUNTESS.

No, he has not.

DUCHESS.

Alas! then all is lost! I see it coming,
The worst that can come! Yes, they will depose him;

The accursed business of the Regensburg diet
Will all be acted o'er again!

COUNTESS.

No! never!
Make your heart easy, sister, as to that.

[THEKLA, *in extreme agitation, throws herself upon her mother, and enfolds her in her arms, weeping.*

DUCHESS.

Yes my poor child!
Thou too hast lost a most affectionate godmother
In the Empress. O that stern unbending man!
In this unhappy marriage what have I
Not suffer'd, not endured? For even as if
I had been link'd on to some wheel of fire
That restless, ceaseless, whirls impetuous onward,
I have pass'd a life of frights and horrors with him,
And ever to the brink of some abyss
With dizzy headlong violence he whirls me.
Nay, do not weep, my child! Let not my sufferings
Presignify unhappiness to thee,
Nor blacken with their shade the fate that waits thee.
There lives no second Friedland: thou, my child,
Hast not to fear thy mother's destiny.

THEKLA.

O let us supplicate him, dearest mother!
Quick! quick! here 's no abiding-place for us.
Here every coming hour broods into life
Some new affrightful monster.

DUCHESS.

Thou wilt share
An easier, calmer lot, my child! We too,
I and thy father, witness'd happy days.
Still think I with delight of those first years,
When he was making progress with glad effort,
When his ambition was a genial fire,
Not that consuming flame which now it is.
The Emperor loved him, trusted him: and all
He undertook could not but be successful.
But since that ill-starr'd day at Regensburg,
Which plunged him headlong from his dignity,
A gloomy uncompanionable spirit,
Unsteady and suspicious, has possess'd him.
His quiet mind forsook him, and no longer
Did he yield up himself in joy and faith
To his old luck, and individual power;
But thenceforth turn'd his heart and best affections
All to those cloudy sciences, which never
Have yet made happy him who follow'd them.

COUNTESS.

You see it, sister! as your eyes permit you.
But surely this is not the conversation
To pass the time in which we are waiting for him.
You know he will be soon here. Would you have him
Find *her* in this condition?

DUCHESS.

Come, my child!
Come wipe away thy tears, and show thy father
A cheerful countenance. See, the tie-knot here
Is off—this hair must not hang so dishevell'd.
Come, dearest! dry thy tears up. They deform
Thy gentle eye.—Well now—what was I saying?
Yes, in good truth, this Piccolomini
Is a most noble and deserving gentleman.

COUNTESS.

That is he, sister!

THEKLA (*to the* COUNTESS, *with marks of great oppression of spirits*).

Aunt, you will excuse me? (*Is going.*)

COUNTESS.

But whither? See, your father comes.

THEKLA.

I cannot see him now.

COUNTESS.

Nay, but bethink you.

THEKLA.

Believe me, I cannot sustain his presence.

COUNTESS.

But he will miss you, will ask after you.

DUCHESS.

What now? Why is she going?

COUNTESS.

She 's not well.

DUCHESS (*anxiously*).

What ails then my beloved child?

[*Both follow the* PRINCESS, *and endeavour to detain her. During this* WALLENSTEIN *appears, engaged in conversation with* ILLO.

SCENE IV.

WALLENSTEIN, ILLO, COUNTESS, DUCHESS, THEKLA.

WALLENSTEIN.

All quiet in the camp?

ILLO.

It is all quiet.

WALLENSTEIN.

In a few hours may couriers come from Prague
With tidings, that this capital is ours.
Then we may drop the mask, and to the troops
Assembled in this town make known the measure
And its result together. In such cases
Example does the whole. Whoever is foremost
Still leads the herd. An imitative creature
Is man. The troops at Prague conceive no other,
Than that the Pilsen army has gone through
The forms of homage to us; and in Pilsen
They shall swear fealty to us, because
The example has been given them by Prague.
Butler, you tell me, has declared himself?

ILLO.

At his own bidding, unsolicited,
He came to offer you himself and regiment.

WALLENSTEIN.

I find we must not give implicit credence
To every warning voice that makes itself
Be listen'd to in the heart. To hold us back,
Oft does the lying Spirit counterfeit
The voice of Truth and inward Revelation,
Scattering false oracles. And thus have I
To intreat forgiveness, for that secretly
I 've wrong'd this honourable gallant man,
This Butler: for a feeling, of the which
I am not master (*fear* I would not call it),
Creeps o'er me instantly, with sense of shuddering,
At his approach, and stops love's joyous motion.
And this same man, against whom I am warn'd,
This honest man is he, who reaches to me
The first pledge of my fortune.

ILLO.

And doubt not

That his example will win over to you
The best men in the army.

WALLENSTEIN.

Go and send
Isolani hither. Send him immediately.
He is under recent obligations to me:
With him will I commence the trial. Go.

[*Exit* ILLO.

WALLENSTEIN (*turns himself round to the females*).

Lo, there the mother with the darling daughter:
For once we 'll have an interval of rest—
Come! my heart yearns to live a cloudless hour
In the beloved circle of my family.

COUNTESS.

'T is long since we 've been thus together, brother.

WALLENSTEIN (*to the* COUNTESS *aside*).

Can she sustain the news? Is she prepared?

COUNTESS.

Not yet.

WALLENSTEIN.

Come here, my sweet girl! Seat thee by me,
For there is a good spirit on thy lips.
Thy mother praised to me thy ready skill:
She says a voice of melody dwells in thee,
Which doth enchant the soul. Now such a voice
Will drive away from me the evil dæmon
That beats his black wings close above my head.

DUCHESS.

Where is thy lute, my daughter? Let thy father
Hear some small trial of thy skill.

THEKLA.

My mother!
I—

DUCHESS.

Trembling? Come, collect thyself. Go, cheer
Thy father.

THEKLA.

O my mother! I—I cannot.

COUNTESS.

How, what is that, niece?

THEKLA (*to the* COUNTESS).

O spare me—sing—now—in this sore anxiety,
Of the o'erburthen'd soul—to sing to *him*,
Who is thrusting, even now, my mother headlong
Into her grave.

DUCHESS.

How, Thekla! Humoursome?
What! shall thy father have express'd a wish
In vain?

COUNTESS.

Here is the lute.

THEKLA.

My God! how can I—

[*The orchestra plays. During the ritornello* THEKLA *expresses in her gestures and countenance the struggle of her feelings: and at the moment that she should begin to sing, contracts herself together, as one shuddering, throws the instrument down, and retires abruptly.*

DUCHESS.

My child! O she is ill—

WALLENSTEIN.

What ails the maiden?
Say, is she often so?

COUNTESS.

Since then herself
Has now betray'd it, I too must no longer
Conceal it.

WALLENSTEIN.

What?

COUNTESS.

She loves him!

WALLENSTEIN.

Loves him! Whom?

COUNTESS.

Max. does she love! Max. Piccolomini.
Hast thou ne'er noticed it? Nor yet my sister?

DUCHESS.

Was it this that lay so heavy on her heart!
God's blessing on thee, my sweet child! Thou need'st
Never take shame upon thee for thy choice.

COUNTESS.

This journey, if 't were not thy aim, ascribe it
To thine own self. Thou shouldst have chosen another
To have attended her.

WALLENSTEIN.

And does he know it?

COUNTESS.

Yes, and he hopes to win her.

WALLENSTEIN.

Hopes to win her!
Is the boy mad?

COUNTESS.

Well—hear it from themselves.

WALLENSTEIN.

He thinks to carry off Duke Friedland's daughter!
Ay?—The thought pleases me.
The young man has no grovelling spirit.

COUNTESS.

Since
Such and such constant favour you have shown him.

WALLENSTEIN.

He chuses finally to be my heir.
And true it is, I love the youth; yea, honour him.
But must he therefore be my daughter's husband!
Is it daughters only? Is it only children
That we must show our favour by?

DUCHESS.

His noble disposition and his manners—

WALLENSTEIN.

Win him my heart, but not my daughter.

DUCHESS.

Then
His rank, his ancestors—

WALLENSTEIN.

Ancestors! What?
He is a subject, and my son-in-law
I will seek out upon the thrones of Europe.

DUCHESS.

O dearest Albrecht! Climb we not too high,
Lest we should fall too low.

WALLENSTEIN.

What? have I paid
A price so heavy to ascend this eminence,
And jut out high above the common herd,
Only to close the mighty part I play
In Life's great drama, with a common kinsman?
Have I for this—

[*Stops suddenly, repressing himself.*

She is the only thing
That will remain behind of me on earth;
And I will see a crown around her head,

Or die in the attempt to place it there.
I hazard all—all! and for this alone,
To lift her into greatness—
Yea, in this moment, in the which we are speaking—
[He recollects himself.
And I must now, like a soft-hearted father,
Couple together in good peasant-fashion
The pair, that chance to suit each other's liking—
And I must do it now, even now, when I
Am stretching out the wreath that is to twine
My full accomplish'd work—no! she is the jewel,
Which I have treasured long, my last, my noblest,
And 't is my purpose not to let her from me
For less than a king's sceptre.

DUCHESS.

O my husband!
You 're ever building, building to the clouds,
Still building higher, and still higher building,
And ne'er reflect, that the poor narrow basis
Cannot sustain the giddy tottering column.

WALLENSTEIN (*to the* COUNTESS).

Have you announced the place of residence
Which I have destined for her?

COUNTESS.

No! not yet.
'T were better you yourself disclosed it to her.

DUCHESS.

How? Do we not return to Karn then?

WALLENSTEIN.

No.

DUCHESS.

And to no other of your lands or seats?

WALLENSTEIN.

You would not be secure there.

DUCHESS.

Not secure
In the Emperor's realms, beneath the Emperor's
Protection?

WALLENSTEIN.

Friedland's wife may be permitted
No longer to hope *that.*

DUCHESS.

O God in heaven!
And have you brought it even to this!

WALLENSTEIN.

In Holland
You 'll find protection.

DUCHESS.

In a Lutheran country?
What? And you send us into Lutheran countries?

WALLENSTEIN.

Duke Franz of Lauenburg conducts you thither.

DUCHESS.

Duke Franz of Lauenburg?
The ally of Sweden, the Emperor's enemy.

WALLENSTEIN.

The Emperor's enemies are mine no longer.

DUCHESS (*casting a look of terror on the* DUKE *and the* COUNTESS).

Is it then true? It is. You are degraded?
Deposed from the command? O God in heaven!

COUNTESS (*aside to the* DUKE).

Leave her in this belief. Thou seest she cannot
Support the real truth.

SCENE V.

To them enter COUNT TERTSKY.

COUNTESS.

—Tertsky!
What ails him? What an image of affright!
He looks as he had seen a ghost.

TERTSKY (*leading* WALLENSTEIN *aside*).

Is it thy command that all the Croats—

WALLENSTEIN.

Mine!

TERTSKY.

We are betray'd.

WALLENSTEIN.

What?

TERTSKY.

They are off! This night
The Jägers likewise—all the villages
In the whole round are empty.

WALLENSTEIN.

Isolani?

TERTSKY.

Him thou hast sent away. Yes, surely.

WALLENSTEIN.

I?

TERTSKY.

No! Hast thou not sent him off? Nor Deodate?
They are vanish'd both of them.

SCENE VI.

To them enter ILLO.

ILLO.

Has Tertsky told thee?

TERTSKY.

He knows all.

ILLO.

And likewise
That Esterhatzy, Goetz, Maradas, Kaunitz,
Kolatto, Palfi, have forsaken thee.

TERTSKY.

Damnation!

WALLENSTEIN (*winks at them*).

Hush!

COUNTESS (*who has been watching them anxiously from the distance and now advances to them*).

Tertsky! Heaven! What is it? What has happen'd?

WALLENSTEIN (*scarcely suppressing his emotions*).

Nothing! let us be gone!

TERTSKY (*following him*).

Theresa, it is nothing.

COUNTESS (*holding him back*).

Nothing? Do I not see, that all the life-blood
Has left your cheeks—look you not like a ghost?
That even my brother but affects a calmness?

PAGE (*enters*).

An Aide-de-Camp inquires for the Count Tertsky.

[TERTSKY *follows the* PAGE.

WALLENSTEIN.

Go, hear his business.
(*To* ILLO).
This could not have happen'd
So unsuspected without mutiny.
Who was on guard at the gates?

ILLO.

T was Tiefenbach.

WALLENSTEIN.

Let Tiefenbach leave guard without delay,
And Tertsky's grenadiers relieve him.
(ILLO *is going*).
Stop!
Hast thou heard aught of Butler?

ILLO.

Him I met:
He will be here himself immediately.
Butler remains unshaken.

[ILLO *exit.* WALLENSTEIN *is following him.*

COUNTESS.

Let him not leave thee, sister! go, detain him!
There's some misfortune.

DUCHESS (*clinging to him*).

Gracious heaven! What is it?

WALLENSTEIN.

Be tranquil! leave me, sister! dearest wife!
We are in camp, and this is nought unusual;
Here storm and sunshine follow one another
With rapid interchanges. These fierce spirits
Champ the curb angrily, and never yet
Did quiet bless the temples of the leader.
If I am to stay, go you. The plaints of women
Ill suit the scene where men must act.

[*He is going:* TERTSKY *returns.*

TERTSKY.

Remain here. From this window must we see it.

WALLENSTEIN (*to the* COUNTESS).

Sister, retire!

COUNTESS.

No—never.

WALLENSTEIN.

'T is my will.

TERTSKY (*leads the* COUNTESS *aside, and drawing her attention to the* DUCHESS).

Theresa!

DUCHESS.

Sister, come! since he commands it.

SCENE VII.

WALLENSTEIN, TERTSKY.

WALLENSTEIN (*stepping to the window*).

What now, then?

TERTSKY.

There are strange movements among all the troops,
And no one knows the cause. Mysteriously,
With gloomy silentness, the several corps
Marshal themselves, each under its own banners.
Tiefenbach's corps make threat'ning movements; only
The Pappenheimers still remain aloof
In their own quarters, and let no one enter.

WALLENSTEIN.

Does Piccolomini appear among them?

TERTSKY.

We are seeking him: he is no where to be met with.

WALLENSTEIN.

What did the Aide-de-Camp deliver to you?

TERTSKY.

My regiments had dispatch'd him; yet once more
They swear fidelity to thee, and wait
The shout for onset, all prepared, and eager.

WALLENSTEIN.

But whence arose this larum in the camp?
It should have been kept secret from the army,
Till fortune had decided for us at Prague.

TERTSKY.

O that thou hadst believed me! Yester evening
Did we conjure thee not to let that skulker,
That fox, Octavio, pass the gates of Pilsen.
Thou gavest him thy own horses to flee from thee.

WALLENSTEIN.

The old tune still! Now, once for all, no more
Of this suspicion—it is doting folly.

TERTSKY.

Thou didst confide in Isolani too;
And lo! he was the first that did desert thee.

WALLENSTEIN.

It was but yesterday I rescued him
From abject wretchedness. Let that go by;
I never reckon'd yet on gratitude.
And wherein doth he wrong in going from me?
He follows still the god whom all his life
He has worshipp'd at the gaming-table. With
My Fortune, and my seeming destiny,
He made the bond, and broke it not with me.
I am but the ship in which his hopes were stow'd,
And with the which well-pleased and confident
He traversed the open sea; now he beholds it
In eminent jeopardy among the coast-rocks,
And hurries to preserve his wares. As light
As the free bird from the hospitable twig
Where it had nested, he flies off from me:
No human tie is snapp'd betwixt us two.
Yea, he deserves to find himself deceived
Who seeks a heart in the unthinking man.
Like shadows on a stream, the forms of life
Impress their characters on the smooth forehead,
Nought sinks into the bosom's silent depth:
Quick sensibility of pain and pleasure
Moves the light fluids lightly; but no soul
Warmeth the inner frame.

TERTSKY.

Yet, would I rather
Trust the smooth brow than that deep furrow'd one.

SCENE VIII.

WALLENSTEIN, TERTSKY, ILLO.

ILLO (*who enters agitated with rage*).

Treason and mutiny!

TERTSKY.

And what further now?

ILLO.

Tiefenbach's soldiers, when I gave the orders
To go off guard—Mutinous villains!

TERTSKY.

Well!

WALLENSTEIN.

What followed?

ILLO.

They refused obedience to them.

TERTSKY.

Fire on them instantly! Give out the order.

WALLENSTEIN.

Gently! what cause did they assign?

ILLO.

No other,
They said, had right to issue orders but
Lieutenant-General *Piccolomini.*

WALLENSTEIN (*in a convulsion of agony*).
What? How is that?

ILLO.
He takes that office on him by commission,
Under sign-manual of the Emperor.

TERTSKY.
From the Emperor—hear'st thou, Duke?

ILLO.
At his incitement
The Generals made that stealthy flight—

TERTSKY.
Duke! hear'st thou?

ILLO.
Caraffa too, and Montecuculi,
Are missing, with six other Generals,
All whom he had induced to follow him.
This plot he has long had in writing by him
From the Emperor; but 't was finally concluded
With all the detail of the operation
Some days ago with the Envoy Questenberg.
[WALLENSTEIN *sinks down into a chair and covers his face.*

TERTSKY.
O hadst thou but believed me!

SCENE IX.

To them enter the COUNTESS.

COUNTESS.
This suspense,
This horrid fear—I can no longer bear it.
For heaven's sake, tell me, what has taken place?

ILLO.
The regiments are all falling off from us.

TERTSKY.
Octavio Piccolomini is a traitor.

COUNTESS.
O my foreboding! [*Rushes out of the room.*

TERTSKY.
Hadst thou but believed me!
Now seest thou how the stars have lied to thee.

WALLENSTEIN.
The stars lie not; but we have here a work
Wrought counter to the stars and destiny.
The science is still honest: this false heart
Forces a lie on the truth-telling heaven.
On a divine law divination rests;
Where nature deviates from that law, and stumbles
Out of her limits, there all science errs.
True, I did not suspect! Were it superstition
Never by such suspicion t' have affronted
The human form, O may that time ne'er come
In which I shame me of the infirmity.
The wildest savage drinks not with the victim,
Into whose breast he means to plunge the sword.
This, this, Octavio, was no hero's deed:
'T was not thy prudence that did conquer mine;
A bad heart triumph'd o'er an honest one.
No shield received the assassin stroke; thou plungest
Thy weapon on an unprotected breast—
Against such weapons I am but a child.

SCENE X.

To these enter BUTLER.

TERTSKY (*meeting him*).
O look there! Butler! Here we 've still a friend!

WALLENSTEIN (*meets him with outspread arms, and embraces him with warmth.*)
Come to my heart, old comrade! Not the sun
Looks out upon us more revivingly
In the earliest month of spring,
Than a friend's countenance in such an hour.

BUTLER.
My General: I come—

WALLENSTEIN (*leaning on* BUTLER's *shoulders*).
Know'st thou already?
That old man has betray'd me to the Emperor.
What say'st thou? Thirty years have we together
Lived out, and held out, sharing joy and hardship.
We have slept in one camp-bed, drunk from one glass,
One morsel shared! I lean'd myself on *him*,
As now I lean me on *thy* faithful shoulder.
And now in the very moment, when, all love,
All confidence, my bosom beat to his,
He sees and takes the advantage, stabs the knife
Slowly into my heart.
[*He hides his face on* BUTLER's *breast.*

BUTLER.
Forget the false one.
What is your present purpose?

WALLENSTEIN.
Well remember'd!
Courage, my soul! I am still rich in friends,
Still loved by Destiny; for in the moment,
That it unmasks the plotting hypocrite,
It sends and proves to me one faithful heart.
Of the hypocrite no more! Think not, his loss
Was that which struck the pang: O no! his treason
Is that which strikes this pang! No more of him!
Dear to my heart, and honour'd were they both,
And the young man—yes—he did truly love me,
He—he—has not deceived me. But enough,
Enough of this—Swift counsel now beseems us.
The Courier, whom Count Kinsky sent from Prague
I expect him every moment: and whatever
He may bring with him, we must take good care
To keep it from the mutineers. Quick, then!
Dispatch some messenger you can rely on
To meet him, and conduct him to me.
[ILLO *is going.*

BUTLER (*detaining him*).
My General, whom expect you then?

WALLENSTEIN.
The Courier
Who brings me word of the event at Prague.

BUTLER (*hesitating*).
Hem!

WALLENSTEIN.
And what now?

BUTLER.
You do not know it?

WALLENSTEIN.
Well?

BUTLER.
From what that larum in the camp arose?

WALLENSTEIN.
From what?

BUTLER.
That Courier——

WALLENSTEIN (*with eager expectation*).
Well?

BUTLER.

Is already here.

TERTSKY *and* ILLO (*at the same time*).

Already here?

WALLENSTEIN.

My Courier?

BUTLER.

For some hours.

WALLENSTEIN.

And I not know it?

BUTLER.

The centinels detain him
In custody.

ILLO (*stamping with his foot*).

Damnation!

BUTLER.

And his letter
Was broken open, and is circulated
Through the whole camp.

WALLENSTEIN.

You know what it contains?

BUTLER.

Question me not!

TERTSKY.

Illo! alas for us.

WALLENSTEIN.

Hide nothing from me—I can hear the worst.
Prague then is lost. It is. Confess it freely.

BUTLER.

Yes! Prague *is* lost. And all the several regiments
At Budweiss, Tabor, Brannau, Konigingratz,
At Brun and Znaym, have forsaken you,
And ta'en the oaths of fealty anew
To the Emperor. Yourself, with Kinsky, Tertsky,
And Illo have been sentenced.

[TERTSKY *and* ILLO *express alarm and fury.* WALLENSTEIN *remains firm and collected.*

WALLENSTEIN.

'T is decided!
'T is well! I have received a sudden cure
From all the pangs of doubt: with steady stream
Once more my life-blood flows! My soul 's secure!
In the night only Friedland's stars can beam.
Lingering irresolute, with fitful fears
I drew the sword—'t was with an inward strife,
While yet the choice was mine. The murderous knife
Is lifted for my heart! Doubt disappears!
I fight now for my head and for my life.

[*Exit* WALLENSTEIN; *the others follow him.*

SCENE XI.

COUNTESS TERTSKY (*enters from a side-room*).

I can endure no longer. No!

[*Looks around her.*

Where are they!
No one is here. They leave me all alone,
Alone in this sore anguish of suspense.
And I must wear the outward show of calmness
Before my sister, and shut in within me
The pangs and agonies of my crowded bosom.
It is not to be borne.—If all should fail;
If—if he must go over to the Swedes,
An empty-handed fugitive, and not
As an ally, a covenanted equal,
A proud commander with his army following;
If we must wander on from land to land,
Like the Count Palatine, of fallen greatness
An ignominious monument—But no!
That day I will not see! And could himself
Endure to sink so low, I would not bear
To see him so low sunken.

SCENE XII.

COUNTESS, DUCHESS, THEKLA.

THEKLA (*endeavouring to hold back the* DUCHESS).

Dear mother, do stay here!

DUCHESS.

No! Here is yet
Some frightful mystery that is hidden from me.
Why does my sister shun me? Don't I see her
Full of suspense and anguish roam about
From room to room?—Art thou not full of terror?
And what import these silent nods and gestures
Which stealthwise thou exchangest with her?

THEKLA.

Nothing:
Nothing, dear mother!

DUCHESS (*to the* COUNTESS).

Sister, I will know.

COUNTESS.

What boots it now to hide it from her? Sooner
Or later she *must* learn to hear and bear it.
'T is not the time now to indulge infirmity;
Courage beseems us now, a heart collect,
And exercise and previous discipline
Of fortitude. One word, and over with it!
Sister, you are deluded. You believe,
The Duke has been deposed—The Duke is not
Deposed—he is——

THEKLA (*going to the* COUNTESS.)

What? do you wish to kill her?

COUNTESS.

The Duke is——

THEKLA (*throwing her arms round her mother.*

O stand firm! stand firm, my mother!

COUNTESS.

Revolted is the Duke; he is preparing
To join the enemy; the army leave him,
And all has fail'd.

ACT II.

SCENE I.

SCENE—*A spacious Room in the* DUKE OF FRIEDLAND'S *Palace.*

WALLENSTEIN (*in armour*).

Thou hast gain'd thy point, Octavio! Once more am I
Almost as friendless as at Regensburg.
There I had nothing left me, but myself—
But what one man can do, you have now experience.
The twigs have you hew'd off, and here I stand
A leafless trunk. But in the sap within
Lives the creating power, and a new world
May sprout forth from it. Once already have I
Proved myself worth an army to you—I alone!
Before the Swedish strength your troops had melted;
Beside the Lech sunk Tilly, your last hope;

Into Bavaria, like a winter torrent,
Did that Gustavus pour, and at Vienna
In his own palace did the Emperor tremble.
Soldiers were scarce, for still the multitude
Follow the luck: all eyes were turn'd on me,
Their helper in distress: the Emperor's pride
Bow'd itself down before the man he had injured.
'T was I must rise, and with creative word
Assemble forces in the desolate camps.
I did it. Like a god of war, my name
Went through the world. The drum was beat—and, lo!
The plough, the work-shop is forsaken, all
Swarm to the old familiar long-loved banners;
And as the wood-choir rich in melody
Assemble quick around the bird of wonder,
When first his throat swells with his magic song,
So did the warlike youth of Germany
Crowd in around the image of my eagle.
I feel myself the being that I was.
It is the soul that builds itself a body,
And Friedland's camp will not remain unfill'd.
Lead then your thousands out to meet me—true!
They are accustom'd under me to conquer.
But not against me. If the head and limbs
Separate from each other, 't will be soon
Made manifest, in which the soul abode.

(ILLO *and* TERTSKY *enter*).

Courage, friends! Courage! We are still unvanquish'd;
I feel my footing firm; five regiments, Tertsky,
Are still our own, and Butler's gallant troops;
And an host of sixteen thousand Swedes to-morrow.
I was not stronger, when nine years ago
I marched forth, with glad heart and high of hope,
To conquer Germany for the Emperor.

SCENE II.

WALLENSTEIN, ILLO, TERTSKY. (*To them enter* NEUMANN, *who leads* TERTSKY *aside, and talks with him.*)

TERTSKY.

What do they want?

WALLENSTEIN.

What now?

TERTSKY.

Ten Cuirassiers
From Pappenheim request leave to address you
In the name of the regiment.

WALLENSTEIN (*hastily to* NEUMANN).

Let them enter.
[*Exit* NEUMANN.
This
May end in something. Mark you. They are still
Doubtful, and may be won.

SCENE III.

WALLENSTEIN, TERTSKY, ILLO, TEN CUIRASSIERS (*led by an* ANSPESSADE,[1] *march up and arrange themselves, after the word of command, in one front before the* DUKE, *and make their obeisance. He takes his hat off, and immediately covers himself again*).

ANSPESSADE.

Halt! Front! Present!

[1] Anspessade, in German, Gefreiter, a soldier inferior to a corporal, but above the centinels. The German name implies that he is exempt from mounting guard.

WALLENSTEIN (*after he has run through them with his eye, to the* ANSPESSADE).

I know thee well. Thou art out of Brüggin in Flanders:
Thy name is Mercy.

ANSPESSADE.

Henry Mercy.

WALLENSTEIN.

Thou wert cut off on the march, surrounded by the Hessians, and didst fight thy way with an hundred and eighty men through their thousand.

ANSPESSADE.

'T was even so, General!

WALLENSTEIN.

What reward hadst thou for this gallant exploit?

ANSPESSADE.

That which I askep for: the honour to serve in this corps.

WALLENSTEIN (*turning to a second*).

Thou wert among the volunteers that seized and made booty of the Swedish battery at Altenburg.

SECOND CUIRASSIER.

Yes, General!

WALLENSTEIN.

I forget no one with whom I have exchanged words. (*A pause.*) Who sends you?

ANSPESSADE.

Your noble regiment, the Cuirassiers of Piccolomini.

WALLENSTEIN.

Why does not your colonel deliver in your request, according to the custom of service?

ANSPESSADE.

Because we would first know *whom* we serve.

WALLENSTEIN.

Begin your address.

ANSPESSADE (*giving the word of command*).

Shoulder your arms!

WALLENSTEIN (*turning to a third*).

Thy name is Risbeck; Cologne is thy birth-place.

THIRD CUIRASSIER.

Risbeck of Cologne.

WALLENSTEIN.

It was thou that broughtest in the Swedish colonel, Diebald, prisoner, in the camp at Nüremberg.

THIRD CUIRASSIER.

It was not I, General!

WALLENSTEIN.

Perfectly right! It was thy elder brother: thou hadst a younger brother too: Where did he stay?

THIRD CUIRASSIER.

He is stationed at Olmütz with the Imperial army.

WALLENSTEIN (*to the* ANSPESSADE).

Now then—begin.

ANSPESSADE.

There came to hand a letter from the Emperor
Commanding us——

WALLENSTEIN (*interrupting him*).

Who chose you?

ANSPESSADE.

Every company
Drew its own man by lot.

WALLENSTEIN.

Now! to the business.

ANSPESSADE.

There came to hand a letter from the Emperor
Commanding us collectively, from thee

All duties of obedience to withdraw,
Because thou wert an enemy and traitor.

WALLENSTEIN.

And what did you determine?

ANSPESSADE.

All our comrades
At Bruannau, Budweiss, Prague and Olmütz, have
Obey'd already; and the regiments here,
Tiefenbach and Toscano, instantly
Did follow their example. But—but we
Do not believe that thou art an enemy
And traitor to thy country, hold it merely
For lie and trick, and a trumped up Spanish story!
[*With warmth.*
Thyself shalt tell us what thy purpose is,
For we have found thee still sincere and true:
No mouth shall interpose itself betwixt
The gallant General and the gallant troops.

WALLENSTEIN.

Therein I recognize my Pappenheimers.

ANSPESSADE.

And this proposal makes thy regiment to thee:
Is it thy purpose merely to preserve
In thy own hands this military sceptre,
Which so becomes thee, which the Emperor
Made over to thee by a covenant?
Is it thy purpose merely to remain
Supreme commander of the Austrian armics?—
We will stand by thee, General! and guarantee
Thy honest rights against all opposition.
And should it chance, that all the other regiments
Turn from thee, by ourselves will we stand forth
Thy faithful soldiers, and, as is our duty,
Far rather let ourselves be cut to pieces,
Than suffer thee to fall. But if it be
As the Emperor's letter says, if it be true,
That thou in traitorous wise wilt lead us over
To the enemy, which God in heaven forbid!
Then we too will forsake thee, and obey
That letter——

WALLENSTEIN.

Hear me, children!

ANSPESSADE.

Yes, or no!
There needs no other answer.

WALLENSTEIN.

Yield attention.
You 're men of sense, examine for yourselves;
Ye think, and do not follow with the herd:
And therefore have I always shown you honour
Above all others, suffer'd you to reason;
Have treated you as free men, and my orders
Were but the echoes of your prior suffrage.—

ANSPESSADE.

Most fair and noble has thy conduct been
To us, my General! With thy confidence
Thou hast honour'd us, and shown us grace and favour
Beyond all other regiments; and thou see'st
We follow not the common herd. We will
Stand by thee faithfully. Speak but one word—
Thy word shall satisfy us, that it is not
A treason which thou meditatest—that
Thou meanest not to lead the army over
To the enemy; nor e'er betray thy country.

WALLENSTEIN.

Me, me are they betraying. The Emperor
Hath sacrificed me to my enemies,
And I must fall, unless my gallant troops
Will rescue me. See! I confide in you.
And be your hearts my strong-hold! At this breast
The aim is taken, at this hoary head.
This is your Spanish gratitude, this is our
Requital for that murderous fight at Lutzen!
For this we threw the naked breast against
The halbert, made for this the frozen earth
Our bed, and the hard stone our pillow! never stream
Too rapid for us, nor wood too impervious:
With chccrful spirit we pursued that Mansfield
Through all the turns and windings of his flight;
Yea, our whole life was but one restless march;
And homeless, as the stirring wind, we travell'd
O'er the war-wasted earth. And now, even now,
That we have well nigh finish'd the hard toil,
The unthankful, the curse-laden toil of weapons,
With faithful indefatigable arm
Have roll'd the heavy war-load up the hill,
Behold! this boy of the Emperor's bears away
The honours of the peacc, an easy prize!
He 'll weave, forsooth, into his flaxen locks
The olive branch, the hard-earn'd ornament
Of this grey head, grown grey beneath the helmet.

ANSPESSADE.

That shall he not, while we can hinder it!
No one, but thou, who hast conducted it
With fame, shall end this war, this frightful war.
Thou led'st us out into the bloody field
Of death; thou and no other shalt conduct us home,
Rejoicing to the lovely plains of peace—
Shalt share with us the fruits of the long toil—

WALLENSTEIN.

What? Think you then at length in late old age
To enjoy the fruits of toil? Believe it not.
Never, no never, will you see the end
Of the contest! you and me, and all of us,
This war will swallow up! War, war, not peace,
Is Austria's wish; and therefore, because I
Endeavour'd after peace, therefore I fall.
For what cares Austria, how long the war
Wears out the armies and lays waste the world?
She will but wax and grow amid the ruin,
And still win new domains.
[*The Cuirassiers express agitation by their gestures.*
Ye 're moved—I see
A noble rage flash from your eyes, ye warriors!
Oh that my spirit might possess you now
Daring as once it led you to the battle!
Ye would stand by me with your veteran arms,
Protect me in my rights; and this is noble!
But think not that *you* can accomplish it,
Your scanty number! to no purpose will you
Have sacrificed you for your General.
[*Confidentially.*
No! let us tread securely, seek for friends;
The Swedes have proffer'd us assistance, let us
Wear for a while the appearance of good will,
And use them for your profit, till we both
Carry the fate of Europe in our hands,
And from our camp to the glad jubilant world
Lead Peace forth with the garland on her head!

ANSPESSADE.

'T is then but mere appearances which thou
Dost put on with the Swede? Thou 'lt not betray

The Emperor? Wilt not turn us into Swedes?
This is the only thing which we desire
To learn from thee.

WALLENSTEIN.

What care I for the Swedes?
I hate them as I hate the pit of hell,
And under Providence I trust right soon
To chase them to their homes across their Baltic.
My cares are only for the whole: I have
A heart—it bleeds within me for the miseries
And piteous groaning of my fellow Germans.
Ye are but common men, but yet ye think
With minds not common; ye appear to me
Worthy before all others, that I whisper ye
A little word or two in confidence!
See now! already for full fifteen years
The war-torch has continued burning, yet
No rest, no pause of conflict. Swede and German,
Papist and Lutheran! neither will give way
To the other, every hand 's against the other.
Each one is party and no one a judge.
Where shall this end? Where 's he that will unravel
This tangle, ever tangling more and more.
It must be cut asunder.
I feel that I am the man of destiny,
And trust, with your assistance, to accomplish it.

SCENE IV.

To these enter BUTLER.

BUTLER (*passionately*).

General! This is not right!

WALLENSTEIN.

What is not right?

BUTLER.

It must needs injure us with all honest men.

WALLENSTEIN.

But what?

BUTLER.

It is an open proclamation
Of insurrection.

WALLENSTEIN.

Well, well—but what is it?

BUTLER.

Count Tertsky's regiments tear the Imperial Eagle
From off the banners, and instead of it,
Have rear'd aloft thy arms.

ANSPESSADE (*abruptly to the Cuirassiers*).

Right about! March!

WALLENSTEIN.

Cursed be this counsel, and accursed who gave it!
[*To the Cuirassiers, who are retiring.*
Halt, children, halt! There 's some mistake in this;
Hark!—I will punish it severely. Stop!
They do not hear. (*To* ILLO). Go after them, assure them,
And bring them back to me, cost what it may.
[ILLO *hurries out.*
This hurls us headlong. Butler! Butler!
You are my evil genius, wherefore must you
Announce it in their presence? It was all
In a fair way. They were half won, those madmen
With their improvident over-readiness—
A cruel game is Fortune playing with me.
The zeal of friends it is that razes me,
And not the hate of enemies.

SCENE V.

To these enter the DUCHESS, *who rushes into the Chamber.* THEKLA *and the* COUNTESS *follow her.*

DUCHESS.

O Albrecht!
What hast thou done?

WALLENSTEIN.

And now comes this beside.

COUNTESS.

Forgive me, brother! It was not in my power.
They know all.

DUCHESS.

What hast thou done?

COUNTESS (*to* TERTSKY).

Is there no hope? Is all lost utterly?

TERTSKY.

All lost. No hope. Prague in the Emperor's hands,
The soldiery have ta'en their oaths anew.

COUNTESS.

That lurking hypocrite, Octavio!
Count Max. is off too?

TERTSKY.

Where can he be? He 's
Gone over to the Emperor with his father.
[THEKLA *rushes out into the arms of her mother, hiding her face in her bosom.*

DUCHESS (*enfolding her in her arms*).

Unhappy child! and more unhappy mother!

WALLENSTEIN (*aside to* TERTSKY).

Quick! Let a carriage stand in readiness
In the court behind the palace. Scherfenberg
Be their attendant; he is faithful to us;
To Egra he 'll conduct them, and we follow.
[*To* ILLO, *who returns.*
Thou hast not brought them back?

ILLO.

Hear'st thou the uproar?
The whole corps of the Pappenheimers is
Drawn out: the younger Piccolomini,
Their colonel, they require: for they affirm,
That he is in the palace here, a prisoner;
And if thou dost not instantly deliver him,
They will find means to free him with the sword.
[*All stand amazed.*

TERTSKY.

What shall we make of this?

WALLENSTEIN.

Said I not so?
O my prophetic heart! he is still here.
He has not betray'd me—he could not betray me.
I never doubted of it.

COUNTESS.

If he be
Still here, then all goes well; for I know what
[*Embracing* THEKLA.
Will keep him here for ever.

TERTSKY.

It can't be.
His father has betray'd us, is gone over
To the Emperor—the son could not have ventured
To stay behind.

THEKLA (*her eye fixed on the door*).

There he is!

SCENE VI.

To these enter MAX. PICCOLOMINI.

MAX.

Yes! here he is! I can endure no longer
To creep on tiptoe round this house, and lurk
In ambush for a favourable moment:
This loitering, this suspense exceeds my powers.
[*Advancing to* THEKLA, *who has thrown herself into her mother's arms.*
Turn not thine eyes away. O look upon me!
Confess it freely before all. Fear no one.
Let who will hear that we both love each other.
Wherefore continue to conceal it? Secrecy
Is for the happy—misery, hopeless misery,
Needeth no veil! Beneath a thousand suns
It dares act openly.
[*He observes the* COUNTESS *looking on* THEKLA *with expressions of triumph.*
No, Lady! No!
Expect not, hope it not. I am not come
To stay: to bid farewell, farewell for ever.
For this I come! 'T is over! I must leave thee!
Thekla, I must—*must* leave thee! Yet thy hatred
Let me not take with me. I pray thee, grant me
One look of sympathy, only one look.
Say that thou dost not hate me. Say it to me, Thekla!
[*Grasps her hand.*
O God! I cannot leave this spot—I cannot!
Cannot let go this hand. O tell me, Thekla!
That thou dost suffer with me, art convinced
That I can not act otherwise.
[THEKLA, *avoiding his look, points with her hand to her father.* MAX. *turns round to the* DUKE, *whom he had not till then perceived.*
Thou here? It was not thou, whom here I sought.
I trusted never more to have beheld thee.
My business is with her alone. Here will I
Receive a full acquittal from this heart—
For any other I am no more concern'd.

WALLENSTEIN.

Think'st thou, that fool-like, I shall let thee go,
And act the mock-magnanimous with thee?
Thy father is become a villain to me;
I hold thee for his son, and nothing more:
Nor to no purpose shalt thou have been given
Into my power. Think not, that I will honour
That ancient love, which so remorselessly
He mangled. They are now past by, those hours
Of friendship and forgiveness. Hate and vengeance
Succeed—'t is now their turn—I too can throw
All feelings of the man aside—can prove
Myself as much a monster as thy father!

MAX. (*calmly*).

Thou wilt proceed with me, as thou hast power.
Thou know'st, I neither brave nor fear thy rage.
What has detain'd me here, that too thou know'st.
[*Taking* THEKLA *by the hand.*
See, Duke! All—all would I have owed to thee,
Would have received from thy paternal hand
The lot of blessed spirits. This hast thou
Laid waste for ever—that concerns not thee.
Indifferent thou tramplest in the dust
Their happiness, who most are thine. The god
Whom thou dost serve, is no benignant deity.
Like as the blind irreconcileable
Fierce element, incapable of compact,
Thy heart's wild impulse only dost thou follow. [1]

WALLENSTEIN.

Thou art describing thy own father's heart.
The adder! O, the charms of hell o'erpower'd me.
He dwelt within me, to my inmost soul
Still to and fro he pass'd, suspected never?
On the wide ocean, in the starry heaven
Did mine eyes seek the enemy, whom I
In my heart's heart had folded! Had I been
To *Ferdinand* what Octavio was to *me*,
War had I ne'er denounced against him. No,
I never could have done it. The Emperor was
My austere master only, not my friend.
There was already war 'twixt him and me
When he deliver'd the Commander's Staff
Into my hands; for there 's a natural
Unceasing war 'twixt cunning and suspicion;
Peace exists only betwixt confidence
And faith. Who poisons confidence, he murders
The future generations.

MAX.

I will not
Defend my father. Woe is me, I cannot!
Hard deeds and luckless have ta'en place; one crime
Drags after it the other in close link.

[1] I have here ventured to omit a considerable number of lines. I fear that I should not have done amiss, had I taken this liberty more frequently. It is, however, incumbent on me to give the original with a literal translation.

Weh denen, die auf Dich vertrann, an Dich
Die sichre Hütte ihres Glückes lehnen,
Gelockt von Deiner geistlichen Gestalt.
Schnell unverhofft, bei nächtlich stiller Weile
Gährts in dem tückschen Feuerschlunde, ladet
Sich aus mit tobender Gewalt, und weg
Troibt über alle Pflanzungen der Menschen
Der wilde Strom in grausender Zerstörung.

WALLENSTEIN.

Du schilderst Deines Vaters Herz. Wie Du's
Beschreibst, so its's in seinem Eingeweide,
In dieser schwarzen Henchlers Brust gestaltet.
O, mich hat Hœllenkunst getæuscht! Mir sandte
Der Abgrund den verflechtesten der Geister,
Den Lügenkundigsten heranf, und stellt' ihn
Als Freund an meine Seite. Wer vermag
Der Hœlle Macht zu widerstehn! Ich zog
Den Basilisken auf an meinem Busen,
Mit meinem Herzblut nährt ich ihn, er sog
Sich schwelgend voll an meiner Liebe Brüsten,
Ich hatte nimmer Arges gegen ihn,
Weit offen liess ich des Gedankens Thore,
Und warf die Schlüssel weiser Vorsicht weg,
Am Sternenhimmel, etc.

LITERAL TRANSLATION.

Alas! for those who place their confidence on thee, against thee lean the secure hut of their fortune, allured by thy hospitable form. Suddenly, unexpectedly, in a moment still as night, there is a fermentation in the treacherous gulf of fire; it discharges itself with raging force, and away over all the plantations of men drives the wild stream in frightful devastation. WALLENSTEIN. Thou art portraying thy father's heart; as thou describest, even so is it shaped in his entrails, in this black hypocrite's breast. O, the art of hell has deceived me! The Abyss sent up to me the most spotted of the spirits, the most skilful in lies, and placed him as a friend by my side. Who may withstand the power of hell? I took the basilisk to my bosom, with my heart's blood I nourished him; he sucked himself glutfull at the breasts of my love. I never harboured evil towards him; wide open did I leave the door of my thoughts; I threw away the key of wise foresight. In the starry heaven, etc.—We find a difficulty in believing this to have been written by SCHILLER.

But we are innocent: how have we fallen
Into this circle of mishap and guilt?
To whom have we been faithless? Wherefore must
The evil deeds and guilt reciprocal
Of our two fathers twine like serpents round us?
Why must our fathers'
Unconquerable hate rend us asunder,
Who love each other?

WALLENSTEIN,

Max., remain with me.
Go you not from me, Max.! Hark! I will tell thee—
How when at Prague, our winter-quarters, thou
Wert brought into my tent a tender boy,
Not yet accustom'd to the German winters;
Thy hand was frozen to the heavy colours;
Thou wouldst not let them go.—
At that time did I take thee in my arms,
And with my mantle did I cover thee;
I was thy nurse, no woman could have been
A kinder to thee; I was not ashamed
To do for thee all little offices,
However strange to me; I tended thee
Till life return'd; and when thine eyes first open'd,
I had thee in my arms. Since then, when have I
Alter'd my feelings towards thee? Many thousands
Have I made rich, presented them with lands;
Rewarded them with dignities and honours;
Thee have I *loved:* my heart, my self, I gave
To thee! They all were aliens: THOU wert
Our child and inmate.[1] Max.! Thou canst not leave me;
It cannot be; I may not, will not think
That Max. can leave me.

MAX.

O my God!

WALLENSTEIN.

I have
Held and sustain'd thee from thy tottering childhood.
What holy bond is there of natural love?
What human tie, that does not knit thee to me?
I love thee, Max.! What did thy father for thee,
Which I too have not done, to the height of duty?
Go hence, forsake me, serve thy Emperor;
He will reward thee with a pretty chain
Of gold; with his ram's fleece will he reward thee;
For that the friend, the father of thy youth,
For that the holiest feeling of humanity,
Was nothing worth to thee.

MAX.

O God! how can I
Do otherwise? Am I not forced to do it,
My oath—my duty—honour—

WALLENSTEIN.

How? Thy duty?
Duty to whom? Who art thou? Max.! bethink thee
What duties mayst *thou* have? If I am acting
A criminal part toward the Emperor,
It is my crime, not thine. Dost thou belong
To thine own self? Art thou thine own commander?
Stand'st thou, like me, a freeman in the world,
That in thy actions thou shouldst plead free agency?

[1] This is a poor and inadequate translation of the affectionate simplicity of the original—

Sie alle waren Fremdlinge, *Du* warst
Das Kind des Hauses.

Indeed the whole speech is in the best style of Massinger. O si sic omnia!

On me thou 'rt planted, I am thy Emperor;
To obey *me,* to *belong* to me, this is
Thy honour, this a law of nature to thee!
And if the planet, on the which thou livest
And hast thy dwelling, from its orbit starts,
It is not in thy choice, whether or no
Thou 'lt follow it. Unfelt it whirls thee onward
Together with his ring and all his moons.
With little guilt stepp'st thou into this contest;
Thee will the world not censure, it will praise thee,
For that thou heldst thy friend more worth to thee
Than names and influences more removed.
For justice is the virtue of the ruler,
Affection and fidelity the subject's.
Not every one doth it beseem to question
The far-off high Arcturus. Most securely
Wilt thou pursue the nearest duty—let
The pilot fix his eye upon the pole-star.

SCENE VII.

To these enter NEUMANN.

WALLENSTEIN.

What now?

NEUMANN.

The Pappenheimers are dismounted,
And are advancing now on foot, determined
With sword in hand to storm the house, and free
The Count, their colonel.

WALLENSTEIN (*to* TERTSKY).

Have the cannon planted.
I will receive them with chain-shot.

[*Exit* TERTSKY.

Prescribe to me with sword in hand! Go Neumann!
'T is my command that they retreat this moment,
And in their ranks in silence wait my pleasure.

[NEUMANN *exit.* ILLO *steps to the window.*

COUNTESS.

Let him go, I entreat thee, let him go.

ILLO (*at the window*).

Hell and perdition!

WALLENSTEIN,

What is it?

ILLO.

They scale the council-house, the roof 's uncover'd
They level at this house the cannon——

MAX.

Madmen!

ILLO.

They are making preparations now to fire on us.

DUCHESS AND COUNTESS.

Merciful Heaven!

MAX. (*to* WALLENSTEIN).

Let me go to them!

WALLENSTEIN.

Not a step!

MAX. (*pointing to* THEKLA *and the* DUCHESS).

But their life! Thine!

WALLENSTEIN.

What tidings bring'st thou, Tertsky?

SCENE VIII.

To these TERTSKY (*returning*).

TERTSKY.

Message and greeting from our faithful regiments.
Their ardour may no longer be curb'd in.

They intreat permission to commence the attack,
And if thou wouldst but give the word of onset,
They could now charge the enemy in rear,
Into the city wedge them, and with ease
O'erpower them in the narrow streets.

ILLO.

O come!
Let not their ardour cool. The soldiery
Of Butler's corps stand by us faithfully;
We are the greater number. Let us charge them,
And finish here in Pilsen the revolt.

WALLENSTEIN.

What? shall this town become a field of slaughter,
And brother-killing Discord, fire-eyed,
Be let loose through its streets to roam and rage?
Shall the decision be deliver'd over
To deaf remorseless Rage, that hears no leader?
Here is not room for battle, only for butchery.
Well, let it be! I have long thought of it,
So let it burst then!

[*Turns to* MAX.

Well, how is it with thee?
Wilt thou attempt a heat with me. Away!
Thou art free to go. Oppose thyself to me,
Front against front, and lead them to the battle;
Thou 'rt skilled in war, thou hast learn'd somewhat under me,
I need not be ashamed of my opponent,
And never had'st thou fairer opportunity
To pay me for thy schooling.

COUNTESS.

Is it then,
Can it have come to this?—What! Cousin, Cousin!
Have you the heart?

MAX.

The regiments that are trusted to my care
I have pledged my troth to bring away from Pilsen
True to the Emperor, and this promise will I
Make good, or perish. More than this no duty
Requires of me. I will not fight against thee,
Unless compell'd; for though an enemy,
Thy head is holy to me still.

[*Two reports of cannon.* ILLO *and* TERTSKY *hurry to the window.*

WALLENSTEIN.

What 's that?

TERTSKY.

He falls.

WALLENSTEIN.

Falls! Who!

ILLO.

Tiefenbach's corps
Discharged the ordnance.

WALLENSTEIN.

Upon whom?

ILLO.

On Neumann,
Your messenger.

WALLENSTEIN (*starting up*).

Ha! Death and hell! I will—

TERTSKY.

Expose thyself to their blind frenzy?

DUCHESS *and* COUNTESS.

No!
For God sake, no!

ILLO.

Not yet, my General!

COUNTESS.

O, hold him! hold him!

WALLENSTEIN.

Leave me——

MAX.

Do it not;
Not yet! This rash and bloody deed has thrown them
Into a frenzy-fit—allow them time——

WALLENSTEIN.

Away! too long already have I loiter'd.
They are emboldened to these outrages,
Beholding not my face. They shall behold
My countenance, shall hear my voice——
Are they not *my* troops? Am I not their General,
And their long-fear'd commander! Let me see,
Whether indeed they do no longer know
That countenance, which was their sun in battle!
From the balcony (mark!), I show myself
To these rebellious forces, and at once
Revolt is mounded, and the high-swoln current
Shrinks back into the old bed of obedience.

[*Exit* WALLENSTEIN; ILLO, TERTSKY, *and* BUTLER *follow.*

SCENE IX.

COUNTESS, DUCHESS, MAX. *and* THEKLA.

COUNTESS (*to the* DUCHESS).

Let them but see him—there is hope still, sister.

DUCHESS.

Hope! I have none!

MAX. (*who during the last scene has been standing at a distance in a visible struggle of feelings, advances*).

This can I not endure.
With most determined soul did I come hither,
My purposed action seem'd unblameable
To my own conscience—and I must stand here
Like one abhorr'd, a hard inhuman being;
Yea, loaded with the curse of all I love!
Must see all whom I love in this sore anguish,
Whom I with one word can make happy—O!
My heart revolts within me, and two voices
Make themselves audible within my bosom.
My soul 's benighted; I no longer can
Distinguish the right track. O, well and truly
Didst thou say, father, I relied too much
On my own heart. My mind moves to and fro—
I know not what to do.

COUNTESS.

What! you know not?
Does not your own heart tell you? O! then I
Will tell it you. Your father is a traitor,
A frightful traitor to us—he has plotted
Against our General's life, has plunged us all
In misery—and you 're his son! 'T is your's
To make the *amends*—Make you the son's fidelity
Outweigh the father's treason, that the name
Of Piccolomini be not a proverb
Of infamy, a common form of cursing
To the posterity of Wallenstein.

MAX.

Where is that voice of truth which I dare follow!
It speaks no longer in *my* heart. We all
But utter what our passionate wishes dictate:

O that an angel would descend from Heaven,
And scoop for me the right, the uncorrupted,
With a pure hand from the pure Fount of Light.
[*His eyes glance on* THEKLA.
What other angel seek I? To this heart,
To this unerring heart, will I submit it;
Will ask thy love, which has the power to bless
The happy man alone, averted ever
From the disquieted and guilty—*canst* thou
Still love me, if I stay? Say that thou canst,
And I am the Duke's——

COUNTESS.

Think, niece——

MAX.

Think nothing, Thekla!
Speak what thou *feelest*.

COUNTESS.

Think upon your father.

MAX.

I did not question thee, as Friedland's daughter.
Thee, the beloved and the unerring god
Within thy heart, I question. What 's at stake?
Not whether diadem of royalty
Be to be won or not—that mightst thou *think* on.
Thy friend, and his soul's quiet, are at stake;
The fortune of a thousand gallant men,
Who will all follow me; shall I forswear
My oath and duty to the Emperor?
Say, shall I send into Octavio's camp
The parricidal ball? For when the ball
Has left its cannon, and is on its flight,
It is no longer a dead instrument!
It lives, a spirit passes into it,
The avenging furies seize possession of it,
And with sure malice guide it the worst way.

THEKLA.

O! Max.——

MAX. (*interrupting her*).

Nay, not precipitately either, Thekla.
I understand thee. To thy noble heart
The hardest duty might appear the highest.
The human, not the great part, would I act.
Even from my childhood to this present hour,
Think what the Duke has done for me, how loved me,
And think too, how my father has repaid him.
O likewise the free lovely impulses
Of hospitality, the pious friend's
Faithful attachment, these too are a holy
Religion to the heart; and heavily
The shudderings of nature do avenge
Themselves on the barbarian that insults them.
Lay all upon the balance, all—then speak,
And let thy heart decide it.

THEKLA.

O, thy own
Hath long ago decided. Follow thou
Thy heart 's first feeling——

COUNTESS.

Oh! ill-fated woman!

THEKLA.

Is it possible, that that can be the right,
The which thy tender heart did not at first
Detect and seize with instant impulse? Go,
Fulfil thy duty! I should ever love thee.
Whate'er thou hadst chosen, thou wouldst still have acted
Nobly and worthy of thee—but repentance
Shall ne'er disturb thy soul's fair peace.

MAX.

Then I
Must leave thee, must part from thee!

THEKLA.

Being faithful
To thine own self, thou art faithful too to me:
If our fates part, our hearts remain united.
A bloody hatred will divide for ever
The houses Piccolomini and Friedland;
But we belong not to our houses—Go!
Quick! quick! and separate thy righteous cause
From our unholy and unblessed one!
The curse of heaven lies upon our head:
'T is dedicate to ruin. Even me
My father's guilt drags with it to perdition.
Mourn not for me:
My destiny will quickly be decided.
[MAX. *clasps her in his arms in extreme emotion. There is heard from behind the Scene a loud, wild, long continued cry,* VIVAT FERDINANDUS, *accompanied by warlike Instruments.* MAX. *and* THEKLA *remain without motion in each other's embraces.*

SCENE X.

To these enter TERTSKY.

COUNTESS (*meeting him*).

What meant that cry? What was it!

TERTSKY.

All is lost!

COUNTESS.

What! they regarded not his countenance?

TERTSKY.

'T was all in vain.

DUCHESS.

They shouted Vivat!

TERTSKY.

To the Emperor.

COUNTESS.

The traitors!

TERTSKY.

Nay! he was not once permitted
Even to address them. Soon as he began,
With deafening noise of warlike instruments
They drown'd his words. But here he comes.

SCENE XI.

To these enter WALLENSTEIN, *accompanied by* ILLO *and* BUTLER.

WALLENSTEIN (*as he enters*).

Tertsky!

TERTSKY.

My General?

WALLENSTEIN.

Let our regiments hold themselves
In readiness to march; for we shall leave
Pilsen ere evening. [*Exit* TERTSKY.
Butler!

BUTLER.

Yes, my General.

WALLENSTEIN.

The Governor at Egra is your friend
And countryman. Write to him instantly
By a post courier. He must be advised,
That we are with him early on the morrow.
You follow us yourself, your regiment with you.

BUTLER.

It shall be done, my General!

WALLENSTEIN (*steps between* MAX. *and* THEKLA, *who have remained during this time in each other's arms*).

Part!

MAX.

O God!

[*Cuirassiers enter with drawn swords, and assemble in the back-ground. At the same time there are heard from below some spirited passages out of the Pappenheim March, which seem to address* MAX.

WALLENSTEIN (*to the Cuirassiers*).

Here he is, he is at liberty: I keep him
No longer.

[*He turns away, and stands so that* MAX. *cannot pass by him nor approach the* PRINCESS.

MAX.

Thou know'st that I have not yet learnt to live
Without thee! I go forth into a desert,
Leaving my all behind me. O do not turn
Thine eyes away from me! O once more show me
Thy ever dear and honour'd countenance.

[MAX. *attempts to take his hand, but is repelled; he turns to the* COUNTESS.

Is there no eye that has a look of pity for me?

[*The* COUNTESS *turns away from him; he turns to the* DUCHESS.

My mother!

DUCHESS.

Go where duty calls you. Haply
The time may come, when you may prove to us
A true friend, a good angel at the throne
Of the Emperor.

MAX.

You give me hope; you would not
Suffer me wholly to despair. No! no!
Mine is a certain misery—Thanks to heaven
That offers me a means of ending it.

[*The military music begins again. The stage fills more and more with armed men.* MAX. *sees* BUTLER *and addresses him.*

And you here, Colonel Butler—and will you
Not follow me? Well, then! remain more faithful
To your new lord, than you have proved yourself
To the Emperor. Come, Butler! promise me,
Give me your hand upon it, that you 'll be
The guardian of his life, its shield, its watchman.
He is attainted, and his princely head
Fair booty for each slave that trades in murder.
Now he doth need the faithful eye of friendship,
And those whom here I see—

[*Casting suspicious looks on* ILLO *and* BUTLER.

ILLO.

Go—seek for traitors
In Galas', in your father's quarters. Here
Is only one. Away! away! and free us
From his detested sight! Away!

[MAX. *attempts once more to approach* THEKLA. WALLENSTEIN *prevents him.* MAX. *stands irresolute, and in apparent anguish. In the mean time the stage fills more and more; and the horns sound from below louder and louder, and each time after a shorter interval.*

MAX.

Blow, blow! O were it but the Swedish Trumpets,
And all the naked swords, which I see here,
Were plunged into my breast! What purpose you?
You come to tear me from this place! Beware,
Ye drive me not to desperation.—Do it not!
Ye may repent it!

[*The stage is entirely filled with armed men.*

Yet more! weight upon weight to drag me down!
Think what ye 're doing. It is not well done
To chuse a man despairing for your leader;
You tear me from my happiness. Well, then,
I dedicate your souls to vengeance. Mark!
For your own ruin you have chosen me:
Who goes with me, must be prepared to perish.

[*He turns to the back-ground, there ensues a sudden and violent movement among the Cuirassiers; they surround him, and carry him off in wild tumult.* WALLENSTEIN *remains immovable.* THEKLA *sinks into her mother's arms. The curtain falls. The music becomes loud and overpowering, and passes into a complete war-march—the orchestra joins it—and continues during the interval between the second and third Act.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.

SCENE—*The* BURGOMASTER'S *House at Egra.*

BUTLER (*just arrived*).

Here then he is, by his destiny conducted.
Here, Friedland! and no farther! From Bohemia
Thy meteor rose, traversed the sky awhile,
And here upon the horders of Bohemia
Must sink.
Thou hast foresworn the ancient colours,
Blind man! yet trustest to thy ancient fortunes.
Profaner of the altar and the hearth,
Against thy Emperor and fellow-citizens
Thou mean'st to wage the war. Friedland, beware—
The evil spirit of revenge impels thee—
Beware thou, that revenge destroy thee not!

SCENE II.

BUTLER *and* GORDON.

GORDON.

Is it you?
How my heart sinks! The Duke a fugitive traitor!
His princely head attainted! O my God!

BUTLER.

You have received the letter which I sent you
By a post-courier?

GORDON.

Yes: and in obedience to it
Open'd the strong hold to him without scruple,
For an imperial letter orders me
To follow your commands implicitly.
But yet forgive me; when even now I saw

The Duke himself, my scruples recommenced.
For truly, not like an attainted man,
Into this town did Friedland make his entrance;
His wonted majesty beam'd from his brow,
And calm, as in the days when all was right,
Did he receive from me the accounts of office.
'T is said, that fallen pride learns condescension:
But sparing and with dignity the Duke
Weigh'd every syllable of approbation,
As masters praise a servant who has done
His duty, and no more.

BUTLER.

'T is all precisely
As I related in my letter. Friedland
Has sold the army to the enemy,
And pledged himself to give up Prague and Egra.
On this report the regiments all forsook him,
The five excepted that belong to Tertsky,
And which have follow'd him, as thou hast seen.
The sentence of attainder is pass'd on him,
And every loyal subject is required
To give him in to justice, dead or living.

GORDON.

A traitor to the Emperor—Such a noble!
Of such high talents! What is human greatness!
I often said, this can't end happily.
His might, his greatness, and this obscure power
Are but a cover'd pit-fall. The human being
May not be trusted to self-government.
The clear and written law, the deep trod foot-marks
Of ancient custom, are all necessary
To keep him in the road of faith and duty.
The authority entrusted to this man
Was unexampled and unnatural,
It placed him on a level with his Emperor,
Till the proud soul unlearn'd submission. Wo is me;
I mourn for him! for where he fell, I deem
Might none stand firm. Alas! dear General,
We in our lucky mediocrity
Have ne'er experienced, cannot calculate,
What dangerous wishes such a height may breed
In the heart of such a man.

BUTLER.

Spare your laments
Till he need sympathy; for at this present
He is still mighty, and still formidable.
The Swedes advance to Egra by forced marches,
And quickly will the junction be accomplish'd.
This must not be! The Duke must never leave
This strong-hold on free footing; for I have
Pledged life and honour here to hold him prisoner,
And your assistance 't is on which I calculate.

GORDON.

O that I had not lived to see this day!
From his hand I received this dignity,
He did himself entrust this strong-hold to me,
Which I am now required to make his dungeon.
We subalterns have no will of our own:
The free, the mighty man alone may listen
To the fair impulse of his human nature.
Ah! we are but the poor tools of the law,
Obedience the sole virtue we dare aim at!

BUTLER.

Nay! let it not afflict you, that your power
Is circumscribed. Much liberty, much error!
The narrow path of duty is securest.

GORDON.

And all then have deserted him, you say?
He has built up the luck of many thousands;
For kingly was his spirit: his full hand
Was ever open! Many a one from dust
[*With a sly glance on* BUTLER.
Hath he selected, from the very dust
Hath raised him into dignity and honour.
And yet no friend, not one friend hath he purchased,
Whose heart beats true to him in the evil hour.

BUTLER.

Here 's one, I see.

GORDON.

I have enjoy'd from him
No grace or favour. I could almost doubt,
If ever in his greatness he once thought on
An old friend of his youth. For still my office
Kept me at distance from him; and when first
He to this citadel appointed me,
He was sincere and serious in his duty.
I do not then abuse his confidence,
If I preserve my fealty in that
Which to my fealty was first deliver'd.

BUTLER.

Say, then, will you fulfil the attainder on him?

GORDON (*pauses reflecting—then as in deep dejection*).

If it be so—if all be as you say—
If he 've betray'd the Emperor, his master,
Have sold the troops, have purposed to deliver
The strong-holds of the country to the enemy—
Yea, truly!—there is no redemption for him!
Yet it is hard, that me the lot should destine
To be the instrument of his perdition;
For we were pages at the court of Bergau
At the same period; but I was the senior.

BUTLER.

I have heard so——

GORDON.

'T is full thirty years since then.
A youth who scarce had seen his twentieth year
Was Wallenstein, when he and I were friends:
Yet even then he had a daring soul:
His frame of mind was serious and severe
Beyond his years: his dreams were of great objects.
He walk'd amidst us of a silent spirit,
Communing with himself; yet I have known him
Transported on a sudden into utterance
Of strange conceptions; kindling into splendour
His soul reveal'd itself, and he spake so
That we look'd round perplex'd upon each other,
Not knowing whether it were craziness,
Or whether it were a god that spoke in him.

BUTLER.

But was it where he fell two story high
From a window-ledge, on which he had fallen asleep;
And rose up free from injury? From this day
(It is reported) he betrayed clear marks
Of a distemper'd fancy.

GORDON.

He became
Doubtless more self-enwrapt and melancholy;
He made himself a Catholic. Marvellously
His marvellous preservation had transform'd him.
Thenceforth he held himself for an exempted
And privileged being, and, as if he were
Incapable of dizziness or fall,

He ran along the unsteady rope of life.
But now our destinies drove us asunder;
He paced with rapid step the way of greatness,
Was Count, and Prince, Duke-regent, and Dictator.
And now is all, all this too little for him;
He stretches forth his hands for a king's crown,
And plunges in unfathomable ruin.

BUTLER.

No more, he comes.

SCENE III.

To these enter WALLENSTEIN, *in conversation with the* BURGOMASTER *of Egra.*

WALLENSTEIN.

You were at one time a free town. I see,
Ye bear the half eagle in your city arms.
Why the *half* eagle only?

BURGOMASTER.

We were free,
But for these last two hundred years has Egra
Remain'd in pledge to the Bohemian crown;
Therefore we bear the half eagle, the other half
Being cancell'd till the empire ransom us,
If ever that should be.

WALLENSTEIN.

Ye merit freedom.
Only be firm and dauntless. Lend your ears
To no designing whispering court-minions.
What may your imposts be?

BURGOMASTER.

So heavy that
We totter under them. The garrison
Lives at our costs.

WALLENSTEIN.

I will relieve you. Tell me,
There are some Protestants among you still?

[*The* BURGOMASTER *hesitates.*

Yes, yes; I know it. Many lie conceal'd
Within these walls—Confess now—you yourself—

[*Fixes his eye on him. The* BURGOMASTER *alarmed.*

Be not alarm'd. I hate the Jesuits.
Could my will have determined it, they had
Been long ago expell'd the empire. Trust me—
Mass-book or bible—'t is all one to me.
Of that the world has had sufficient proof.
I built a church for the reform'd in Glogau
At my own instance. Harkye, Burgomaster!
What is your name?

BURGOMASTER.

Pachhalbel, may it please you.

WALLENSTEIN.

Harkye!——
But let it go no further, what I now
Disclose to you in confidence.

[*Laying his hand on the* BURGOMASTER'S *shoulder with a certain solemnity.*

The times
Draw near to their fulfilment, Burgomaster!
The high will fall, the low will be exalted.
Harkye! But keep it to yourself! The end
Approaches of the Spanish double monarchy—
A new arrangement is at hand. You saw
The three moons that appear'd at once in the Heaven.

BURGOMASTER.

With wonder and affright!

WALLENSTEIN.

Whereof did two
Strangely transform themselves to bloody daggers,
And only one, the middle moon, remain'd
Steady and clear.

BURGOMASTER.

We applied it to the Turks.

WALLENSTEIN.

The Turks! That all?—I tell you, that two empires
Will set in blood, in the East and in the West,
And Luth'ranism alone remain.

[*Observing* GORDON *and* BUTLER.

I' faith,
'T was a smart cannonading that we heard
This evening, as we journey'd hitherward;
'T was on our left hand. Did you hear it here?

GORDON.

Distinctly. The wind brought it from the South.

BUTLER.

It seem'd to come from Weiden or from Neustadt.

WALLENSTEIN.

'T is likely. That 's the route the Swedes are taking.
How strong is the garrison?

GORDON.

Not quite two hundred
Competent men, the rest are invalids.

WALLENSTEIN.

Good! And how many in the vale of Jochim.

GORDON.

Two hundred arquebussiers have I sent thither
To fortify the posts against the Swedes.

WALLENSTEIN.

Good! I commend your foresight. At the works too
You have done somewhat?

GORDON.

Two additional batteries
I caused to be run up. They were needless.
The Rhine-Grave presses hard upon us, General!

WALLENSTEIN.

You have been watchful in your Emperor's service.
I am content with you, Lieutenant-Colonel.

[*To* BUTLER.

Release the outposts in the vale of Jochim
With all the stations in the enemy's route.

[*To* GORDON.

Governor, in your faithful hands I leave
My wife, my daughter, and my sister. I
Shall make no stay here, and wait but the arrival
Of letters to take leave of you, together
With all the regiments.

SCENE IV.

To these enter COUNT TERTSKY.

TERTSKY.

Joy, General; joy! I bring you welcome tidings.

WALLENSTEIN.

And what may they be!

TERTSKY.

There has been an engagement
At Neustadt; the Swedes gain'd the victory.

WALLENSTEIN.

From whence did you receive the intelligence?

TERTSKY.

A countryman from Tirschenseil convey'd it.
Soon after sunrise did the fight begin!
A troop of the Imperialists from Fachau
Had forced their way into the Swedish camp;
The cannonade continued full two hours;
There were left dead upon the field a thousand
Imperialists, together with their Colonel;
Further than this he did not know.

WALLENSTEIN.

How came
Imperial troops at Neustadt? Altringer,
But yesterday, stood sixty miles from there.
Count Galas' force collects at Frauenberg,
And have not the full complement. Is it possible,
That Suys perchance had ventured so far onward?
It cannot be.

TERTSKY.

We shall soon know the whole,
For here comes Illo, full of haste, and joyous.

SCENE V.

To these enter ILLO.

ILLO (*to* WALLENSTEIN).

A courier, Duke! he wishes to speak with thee.

TERTSKY (*eagerly*).

Does he bring confirmation of the victory?

WALLENSTEIN (*at the same time*).

What does he bring? Whence comes he?

ILLO.

From the Rhine-Grave.
And what he brings I can announce to you
Beforehand. Seven leagues distant are the Swedes;
At Neustadt did Max. Piccolomini
Throw himself on them with the cavalry;
A murderous fight took place! o'erpower'd by numbers
The Pappenheimers all, with Max. their leader,
[WALLENSTEIN *shudders and turns pale.*
Were left dead on the field.

WALLENSTEIN (*after a pause in a low voice*).

Where is the messenger? Conduct me to him.
[WALLENSTEIN *is going, when* LADY NEUBRUNN *rushes into the room. Some servants follow her and run across the stage.*

NEUBRUNN.

Help! Help!

ILLO *and* TERTSKY (*at the same time*).

What now?

NEUBRUNN.

The Princes!

WALLENSTEIN *and* TERTSKY.

Does she know it?

NEUBRUNN (*at the same time with them*).

She is dying! [*Hurries off the stage, when* WALLENSTEIN *and* TERTSKY *follow her.*

SCENE VI.

BUTLER *and* GORDON.

GORDON.

What 's this?

BUTLER.

She has lost the man she loved—
Young Piccolomini who fell in the battle.

GORDON.

Unfortunate Lady!

BUTLER.

You have heard what Illo
Reporteth, that the Swedes are conquerors,
And marching hitherward.

GORDON.

Too well I heard it.

BUTLER.

They are twelve regiments strong, and there are five
Close by us to protect the Duke. We have
Only my single regiment; and the garrison
Is not two hundred strong.

GORDON.

'T is even so.

BUTLER.

It is not possible with such small force
To hold in custody a man like him.

GORDON.

I grant it.

BUTLER.

Soon the numbers would disarm us,
And liberate him.

GORDON.

It were to be fear'd.

BUTLER (*after a pause*).

Know, I am warranty for the event;
With my head have I pledged myself for his,
Must make my word good, cost it what it will,
And if alive we cannot hold him prisoner,
Why—death makes all things certain!

GORDON.

Butler! What?
Do I understand you? Gracious God! *You* could—

BUTLER.

He must not live.

GORDON.

And *you* can do the deed!

BUTLER.

Either you or I. This morning was his last.

GORDON.

You would assassinate him.

BUTLER.

'T is my purpose.

GORDON.

Who leans with his whole confidence upon you!

BUTLER.

Such is his evil destiny!

GORDON.

Your General!
The sacred person of your General!

BUTLER.

My General he *has been.*

GORDON.

That 't is only
An «*has been*» washes out no villany.
And without judgment pass'd?

BUTLER.

The execution
Is here instead of judgment.

GORDON.

This were murder,
Not justice. The most guilty should be heard.

BUTLER.

His guilt is clear, the Emperor has pass'd judgment,
And we but execute his will.

GORDON.

We should not
Hurry to realize a bloody sentence.
A word may be recall'd, a life can never be.

BUTLER.

Dispatch in service pleases sovereigns.

GORDON.

No honest man 's ambitious to press forward
To the hangman's service.

BUTLER.

And no brave man loses
His colour at a daring enterprise.

GORDON.

A brave man hazards life, but not his conscience.

BUTLER.

What then? Shall he go forth anew to kindle
The unextinguishable flame of war?

GORDON.

Seize him, and hold him prisoner—do not kill him!

BUTLER.

Had not the Emperor's army been defeated,
I might have done so.—But 't is now past by.

GORDON.

O, wherefore open'd I the strong-hold to him?

BUTLER.

His destiny and not the place destroys him.

GORDON.

Upon these ramparts, as beseem'd a soldier,
I had fallen, defending the Emperor's citadel!

BUTLER.

Yes! and a thousand gallant men have perish'd!

GORDON.

Doing their duty—that adorns the man!
But murder's a black deed, and nature curses it.

BUTLER (*brings out a paper*).

Here is the manifesto which commands us
To gain possession of his person. See—
It is addressed to you as well as me.
Are you content to take the consequences,
If through our fault he escape to the enemy?

GORDON.

I?—Gracious God!

BUTLER.

Take it on yourself.
Come of it what it may, on you I lay it.

GORDON.

O God in heaven!

BUTLER.

Can you advise aught else
Wherewith to execute the Emperor's purpose?
Say if you can. For I desire his fall,
Not his destruction.

GORDON.

Merciful heaven! what must be
I see as clear as you. Yet still the heart
Within my bosom beats with other feelings!

BUTLER.

Mine is of harder stuff! Necessity
In her rough school hath steel'd me. And this Illo
And Tertsky likewise, they must not survive him.

GORDON.

I feel no pang for these. Their own bad hearts
Impell'd them, not the influence of the stars.
'T was they who strew'd the seeds of evil passions
In his calm breast, and with officious villany
Water'd and nursed the pois'nous plants. May they
Receive their earnests to the uttermost mite!

BUTLER.

And their death shall precede his!
We meant to have taken them alive this evening
Amid the merry-making of a feast,
And keep them prisoners in the citadels.
But this makes shorter work. I go this instant
To give the necessary orders.

SCENE VII.

To these enter ILLO *and* TERTSKY.

TERTSKY.

Our luck is on the turn. To-morrow come
The Swedes—twelve thousand gallant warriors, Illo!
Then straightways for Vienna. Cheerily, friend!
What! meet such news with such a moody face?

ILLO.

It lies with us at present to prescribe
Laws, and take vengeance on those worthless traitors,
Those skulking cowards that deserted us;
One has already done his bitter penance,
The Piccolomini: be his the fate
Of all who wish us evil! This flies sure
To the old man's heart; he has his whole life long
Fretted and toil'd to raise his ancient house
From a Count's title to the name of Prince;
And now must seek a grave for his only son.

BUTLER.

'T was pity, though! A youth of such heroic
And gentle temperament! The Duke himself,
'T was easily seen, how near it went to his heart.

ILLO.

Hark ye, old friend! That is the very point
That never pleased me in our General—
He ever gave the preference to the Italians.
Yea, at this very moment, by my soul!
He 'd gladly see us all dead ten times over,
Could he thereby recal his friend to life.

TERTSKY.

Hush, hush! Let the dead rest! This evening's business
Is, who can fairly drink the other down—
Your regiment, Illo! gives the entertainment.
Come! we will keep a merry carnival—
The night for once be day, and mid full glasses
Will we expect the Swedish avant-garde.

ILLO.

Yes, let us be of good cheer for to-day,
For there 's hot work before us, friends! This sword
Shall have no rest, till it be bathed to the hilt
In Austrian blood.

GORDON.

Shame, shame! what talk is this,
My Lord Field Marshal? Wherefore foam you so
Against your Emperor?

BUTLER.

Hope not too much
From this first victory. Bethink you, sirs!
How rapidly the wheel of Fortune turns;
The Emperor still is formidably strong.

ILLO.

The Emperor has soldiers, no commander,
For this King Ferdinand of Hungary
Is but a tyro. Galas? He 's no luck,

And was of old the ruiner of armies.
And then this viper, this Octavio,
Is excellent at stabbing in the back,
But ne'er meets Friedland in the open field.

TERTSKY.

Trust me, my friends, it cannot but succeed;
Fortune, we know, can ne'er forsake the Duke!
And only under Wallenstein can Austria
Be conqueror.

ILLO.

The Duke will soon assemble
A mighty army: all comes crowding, streaming
To banners, dedicate by destiny,
To fame, and prosperous fortune. I behold
Old times come back again! he will become
Once more the mighty Lord which he has been.
How will the fools, who 've now deserted him,
Look then? I can't but laugh to think of them,
For lands will he present to all his friends,
And like a King and Emperor reward
True services; but we 've the nearest claims.
[*To* GORDON.
You will not be forgotten, Governor!
He 'll take you from this nest, and bid you shine
In higher station: your fidelity
Well merits it.

GORDON.

I am content already,
And wish to climb no higher; where great height is,
The fall must needs be great. « Great height, great depth. »

ILLO.

Here you have no more business, for to-morrow
The Swedes will take possession of the citadel.
Come, Tertsky, it is supper-time. What think you?
Nay, shall we have the State illuminated
In honour of the Swede? And who refuses
To do it is a Spaniard and a traitor.

TERTSKY.

Nay! Nay! not that, it will not please the Duke—

ILLO.

What! we are masters here; no soul shall dare
Avow himself imperial where we 've the rule.
Gordon! good night, and for the last time, take
A fair leave of the place. Send out patroles
To make secure, the watch-word may be alter'd
At the stroke of ten; deliver in the keys
To the Duke himself, and then you 've quit for ever
Your wardship of the gates, for on to-morrow
The Swedes will take possession of the citadel.

TERTSKY (*as he is going, to* BUTLER).

You come, though, to the castle?

BUTLER.

At the right time.
[*Exeunt* TERTSKY *and* ILLO.

SCENE VIII.

GORDON *and* BUTLER.

GORDON (*looking after them*).

Unhappy men! How free from all foreboding!
They rush into the outspread net of murder,
In the blind drunkenness of victory;
I have no pity for their fate. This Illo,
This overflowing and fool-hardy villain
That would fain bathe himself in his Emperor's blood.—

BUTLER.

Do as he order'd you. Send round patroles,
Take measures for the citadel's security;
When they are within I close the castle-gate
That nothing may transpire.

GORDON (*with earnest anxiety*).

Oh! haste not so!
Nay, stop; first tell me——

BUTLER.

You have heard already,
To-morrow to the Swedes belongs. This night
Alone is ours. They make good expedition.
But we will make still greater. Fare you well.

GORDON.

Ah! your looks tell me nothing good. Nay, Butler,
I pray you, promise me!

BUTLER.

The sun has set;
A fateful evening doth descend upon us,
And brings on their long night! Their evil stars
Deliver them unarm'd into our hands,
And from their drunken dream of golden fortunes
The dagger at their heart shall rouse them. Well,
The Duke was ever a great calculator;
His fellow-men were figures on his chess-board,
To move and station, as his game required.
Other men's honour, dignity, good name,
Did he shift like pawns, and made no conscience of it:
Still calculating, calculating still;
And yet at last his calculation proves
Erroneous; the whole game is lost; and lo!
His own life will be found among the forfeits.

GORDON.

O think not of his errors now; remember
His greatness, his munificence, think on all
The lovely features of his character,
On all the noble exploits of his life,
And let them, like an angel's arm, unseen
Arrest the lifted sword.

BUTLER.

It is too late.
I suffer not myself to feel compassion,
Dark thoughts and bloody are my *duty* now:
[*Grasping* GORDON's *hand.*
Gordon! 't is not my hatred (I pretend not
To love the Duke, and have no cause to love him),
Yet 't is not now my hatred that impels me
To be his murderer. 'T is his evil fate.
Hostile concurrences of many events
Control and subjugate me to the office.
In vain the human being meditates
Free action. He is but the wire-work'd[1] puppet
Of the blind power, which out of his own choice
Creates for him a dread necessity.
What too would it avail him, if there were
A something pleading for him in my heart—
Still I must kill him.

GORDON.

If your heart speak to you,
Follow its impulse. 'T is the voice of God.
Think you your fortunes will grow prosperous
Bedew'd with blood—his blood? Believe it not!

[1] We doubt the propriety of putting so blasphemous a sentiment in the mouth of any character. T.

BUTLER.

You know not. Ask not! Wherefore should it happen,
That the Swedes gain'd the victory, and hasten
With such forced marches hitherward? Fain would I
Have given him to the Emperor's mercy.—Gordon!
I do not wish his blood—But I must ransom
The honour of my word,—it lies in pledge—
And he must die, or——

[*Passionately grasping* GORDON's *hand.*

Listen then, and know!
I am *dishonour'd* if the Duke escape us.

GORDON.

O! to save such a man——

BUTLER.

What!

GORDON.

It is worth
A sacrifice.—Come, friend! Be noble-minded!
Our own heart, and not other men's opinions,
Forms our true honour.

BUTLER (*with a cold and haughty air*).

He is a great Lord,
This Duke—and I am but of mean importance.
This is what you would say? Wherein concerns it
The world at large, you mean to hint to me,
Whether the man of low extraction keeps
Or blemishes his honour—
So that the man of princely rank be saved.
We all do stamp our value on ourselves.
The price we challenge for ourselves is given us.
There does not live on earth the man so station'd,
That I despise myself compared with him.
Man is made great or little by his own will;
Because I am true to mine, therefore he dies.

GORDON.

I am endeavouring to move a rock.
Thou hadst a mother, yet no human feelings.
I cannot hinder you, but may some God
Rescue him from you! [*Exit* GORDON.

SCENE IX.

BUTLER (*alone*).

I treasured my good name all my life long;
The Duke has cheated me of life's best jewel,
So that I blush before this poor weak Gordon!
He prizes above all his fealty;
His conscious soul accuses him of nothing;
In opposition to his own soft heart
He subjugates himself to an iron duty.
Me in a weaker moment passion warp'd;
I stand beside him, and must feel myself
The worse man of the two. What, though the world
Is ignorant of my purposed treason, yet
One man does know it, and can prove it too—
High-minded Piccolomini!
There lives the man who can dishonour me!
This ignominy blood alone can cleanse!
Duke Friedland, thou or I—Into my own hands
Fortune delivers me—The dearest thing a man has is himself.

(*The curtain drops.*)

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

SCENE—*Butler's Chamber.*

BUTLER, MAJOR, *and* GERALDIN.

BUTLER.

Find me twelve strong Dragoons, arm them with pikes,
For there must be no firing——
Conceal them somewhere near the banquet-room,
And soon as the dessert is served up, rush all in
And cry—Who is loyal to the Emperor?
I will overturn the table—while you attack
Illo and Tertsky, and dispatch them both.
The castle-palace is well barr'd and guarded,
That no intelligence of this proceeding
May make its way to the Duke.—Go instantly;
Have you yet sent for Captain Devereux
And the Macdonald?——

GERALDIN.

They 'll be here anon.

[*Exit* GERALDIN.

BUTLER.

Here 's no room for delay. The citizens
Declare for him, a dizzy drunken spirit
Possesses the whole town. They see in the Duke
A Prince of peace, a founder of new ages
And golden times. Arms too have been given out
By the town-council, and a hundred citizens
Have volunteer'd themselves to stand on guard.
Dispatch then be the word. For enemies
Threaten us from without and from within.

SCENE II.

BUTLER, CAPTAIN DEVEREUX, *and* MACDONALD.

MACDONALD.

Here we are, General.

DEVEREUX.

What 's to be the watchword?

BUTLER.

Long live the Emperor!

BOTH (*recoiling*).

How?

BUTLER.

Live the House of Austria!

DEVEREUX.

Have we not sworn fidelity to Friedland?

MACDONALD.

Have we not march'd to this place to protect him?

BUTLER.

Protect a traitor, and his country's enemy!

DEVEREUX.

Why, yes! in his name you administer'd
Our oath.

MACDONALD.

And followed him yourself to Egra.

BUTLER.

I did it the more surely to destroy him.

DEVEREUX.

So then!

MACDONALD.

An alter'd case!

BUTLER (*to* DEVEREUX).

Thou wretched man!
So easily leavest thou thy oath and colours?

DEVEREUX.

The devil!—I but follow'd your example,
If you could prove a villain, why not we?

MACDONALD.

We've nought to do with *thinking*—that's your business.
You are our General, and give out the orders;
We follow you, though the track lead to hell.

BUTLER (*appeased*).

Good then! we know each other.

MACDONALD.

I should hope so.

DEVEREUX.

Soldiers of fortune are we—who bids most,
He has us.

MACDONALD.

'T is e'en so!

BUTLER.

Well, for the present
Ye must remain honest and faithful soldiers.

DEVEREUX.

We wish no other.

BUTLER.

Aye, and make your fortunes.

MACDONALD.

That is still better.

BUTLER.

Listen!

BOTH.

We attend.

BUTLER.

It is the Emperor's will and ordinance
To seize the person of the Prince-Duke Friedland,
Alive or dead.

DEVEREUX.

It runs so in the letter.

MACDONALD.

Alive or dead—these were the very words.

BUTLER.

And he shall be rewarded from the State
In land and gold, who proffers aid thereto.

DEVEREUX.

Ay! that sounds well. The *words* sound always well
That travel hither from the Court. Yes! yes!
We know already what Court-words import.
A golden chain perhaps in sign of favour,
Or an old charger, or a parchment patent,
And such like.—The Prince-Duke pays better.

MACDONALD.

Yes,
The Duke's a splendid paymaster.

BUTLER.

All over
With that, my friends! His lucky stars are set.

MACDONALD.

And is that certain?

BUTLER.

You have my word for it.

DEVEREUX.

His lucky fortunes all past by?

BUTLER.

For ever:
He is as poor as we.

MACDONALD.

As poor as we?

DEVEREUX.

Macdonald, we 'll desert him.

BUTLER.

We 'll desert him?
Full twenty thousand have done that already;
We must do more, my countrymen! In short—
We—we must kill him.

BOTH (*starting back*).

Kill him!

BUTLER.

Yes! must kill him;
And for that purpose have I chosen you.

BOTH.

Us!

BUTLER.

You, Captain Devereux, and thee Macdonald.

DEVEREUX (*after a pause*).

Chuse you some other.

BUTLER.

What? art dastardly?
Thou, with full thirty lives to answer for—
Thou conscientious of a sudden?

DEVEREUX.

Nay,
To assassinate our Lord and General—

MACDONALD.

To whom we 've sworn a soldier's oath—

BUTLER.

The oath
Is null, for Friedland is a traitor.

DEVEREUX.

No, no! it is too bad!

MACDONALD.

Yes, by my soul!
It is too bad. One has a conscience too—

DEVEREUX.

If it were not our Chieftain, who so long
Has issued the commands, and claim'd our duty.

BUTLER.

Is that the objection?

DEVEREUX.

Were it my own father,
And the Emperor's service should demand it of me,
It might be done perhaps—But we are soldiers,
And to assassinate our Chief Commander,
That is a sin, a foul abomination,
From which no Monk or Confessor absolves us.

BUTLER.

I am your Pope, and give you absolution.
Determine quickly!

DEVEREUX.

'T will not do.

MACDONALD.

'T wont do!

BUTLER.

Well, off then! and—send Pestalutz to me.

DEVEREUX (*hesitates*).

The Pestalutz—

MACDONALD.

What may you want with him?

BUTLER.

If you reject it, we can find enough—

DEVEREUX.

Nay, if he must fall, we may earn the bounty

As well as any other. What think you,
Brother Macdonald!

MACDONALD.

Why, if he *must* fall,
And *will* fall, and it can't be otherwise,
One would not give place to this Pestalutz.

DEVEREUX (*after some reflection*).

When do you purpose he should fall?

BUTLER.

This night.
To-morrow will the Swedes be at our gates.

DEVEREUX.

You take upon you all the consequences!

BUTLER.

I take the whole upon me.

DEVEREUX.

And it is
The Emperor's will, his express absolute will?
For we have instances, that folks may like
The murder, and yet hang the murderer.

BUTLER.

The manifesto says—alive or dead.
Alive—'t is not possible—you seet it is not.

DEVEREUX.

Well, dead then! dead! But how can we come at him?
The town is fill'd with Tertsky's soldiery.

MACDONALD.

Ay! and then Tertsky still remains, and Illo—

BUTLER.

With these you shall begin—you understand me?

DEVEREUX.

How? And must they too perish!

BUTLER.

They the first.

MACDONALD.

Hear, Devereux! A bloody evening this.

DEVEREUX.

Have you a man for that? Commission me—

BUTLER.

'T is given in trust to Major Geraldin;
This is a carnival night, and there 's a feast
Given at the castle—there we shall surprise them,
And hew them down. The Pestalutz, and Lesley
Have that commission—soon as that is finish'd—

DEVEREUX.

Hear, General! It will be all one to you—
Harkye, let me exchange with Geraldin.

BUTLER.

'T will be the lesser danger with the Duke.

DEVEREUX.

Danger! The devil! What do you think me, General?
'T is the Duke's eye, and not his sword, I fear.

BUTLER.

What can his eye do to thee?

DEVEREUX.

Death and hell!
Thou know'st that I 'm no milk-sop, General!
But 't is not eight days since the Duke did send me
Twenty gold pieces for this good warm coat
Which I have on! and then for him to see me
Standing before him with the pike, his murderer,
That eye of his looking upon this coat—
Why—why—the devil fetch me! I 'm no milk-sop!

BUTLER.

The Duke presented thee this good warm coat,
And thou, a needy wight, hast pangs of conscience
To run him through the body in return.
A coat that is far better and far warmer
Did the Emperor give to him, the Prince's mantle.
How doth he thank the Emperor? With revolt,
And treason.

DEVEREUX.

That is true. The devil take
Such thankers! I 'll dispatch him.

BUTLER.

And wouldst quiet
Thy conscience, thou hast nought to do but simply
Pull off the coat; so canst thou do the deed
With light heart and good spirits.

DEVEREUX.

You are right.
That did not strike me. I 'll pull off the coat—
So there 's an end of it.

MACDONALD.

Yes, but there 's another
Point to be thought of.

BUTLER.

And what 's that, Macdonald?

MACDONALD.

What avails sword or dagger against *him?*
He is not to be wounded—he is—

BUTLER (*starting up*).

What?

MACDONALD.

Safe against shot, and stab and flash! Hard frozen,
Secured, and warranted by the black art!
His body is impenetrable, I tell you.

DEVEREUX.

In Inglestadt there was just such another:
His whole skin was the same as steel; at last
We were obliged to beat him down with gunstocks.

MACDONALD.

Hear what I 'll do.

DEVEREUX.

Well?

MACDONALD.

In the cloister here
There 's a Dominican, my countryman.
I 'll make him dip my sword and pike for me
In holy water, and say over them
One of his strongest blessings. That 's probatum!
Nothing can stand 'gainst that.

BUTLER.

So do, Macdonald!
But now go and select from out the regiment
Twenty or thirty able-bodied fellows,
And let them take the oaths to the Emperor.
Then when it strikes eleven, when the first rounds
Are pass'd, conduct them silently as may be
To the house—I will myself be not far off.

DEVEREUX.

But how do we get through Hartschier and Gordon,
That stand on guard there in the inner chamber?

BUTLER.

I have made myself acquainted with the place.
I lead you through a back-door that 's defended
By one man only. Me my rank and office
Give access to the Duke at every hour.
I 'll go before you—with one poniard-stroke
Cut Hartschier's windpipe, and make way for you.

DEVEREUX.

And when we are there, by what means shall we gain

The Duke's bed-chamber, without his alarming
The servants of the Court; for he has here
A numerous company of followers?

BUTLER.

The attendants fill the right wing; he hates bustle,
And lodges in the left wing quite alone.

DEVEREUX.

Were it well over—hey, Macdonald? I
Feel queerly on the occasion, devil knows!

MACDONALD.

And I too. 'T is too great a personage.
People will hold us for a brace of villains.

BUTLER.

In plenty, honour, splendour—You may safely
Laugh at the people's babble.

DEVEREUX.

If the business
Squares with one's honour—if that be quite certain—

BUTLER.

Set your hearts quite at ease. Ye save for Ferdinand
His Crown and Empire. The reward can be
No small one.

DEVEREUX.

And 't is his purpose to dethrone the Emperor?

BUTLER.

Yes!—Yes!—to rob him of his Crown and Life.

DEVEREUX.

And he must fall by the executioner's hands,
Should we deliver him up to the Emperor
Alive?

BUTLER.

It were his certain destiny.

DEVEREUX.

Well! Well! Come then, Macdonald, he shall not
Lie long in pain.

[*Exeunt* BUTLER *through one door,* MACDONALD *and* DEVEREUX *through the other.*

SCENE III.

SCENE—*A Gothic and gloomy Apartment at the* DUCHESS FRIEDLAND'S. THEKLA *on a seat, pale, her eyes closed. The* DUCHESS *and* LADY NEUBRUNN *busied about her.* WALLENSTEIN *and the* COUNTESS *in conversation.*

WALLENSTEIN.

How knew she it so soon?

COUNTESS.

She seems to have
Foreboded some misfortune. The report
Of an engagement, in the which had fallen
A colonel of the Imperial army, frighten'd her.
I saw it instantly. She flew to meet
The Swedish Courier, and with sudden questioning,
Soon wrested from him the disastrous secret.
Too late we miss'd her, hasten'd after her,
We found her lying in his arms, all pale
And in a swoon.

WALLENSTEIN.

A heavy, heavy blow!
And she so unprepared! Poor child! How is it?
[*Turning to the* DUCHESS.
Is she coming to herself?

DUCHESS.

Her eyes are opening.

COUNTESS.

She lives.

THEKLA (*looking around her*).

Where am I?

WALLENSTEIN (*steps to her, raising her up in his arms*).

Come, cheerly, Thekla! be my own brave girl!
See, there 's thy loving mother. Thou art in
Thy father's arms.

THEKLA (*standing up*).

Where is he? Is he gone?

DUCHESS.

Who gone, my daughter?

THEKLA.

He—the man who utter'd
That word of misery.

DUCHESS.

O! think not of it,
My Thekla!

WALLENSTEIN.

Give her sorrow leave to talk!
Let her complain—mingle your tears with hers,
For she hath suffer'd a deep anguish; but
She 'll rise superior to it, for my Thekla
Hath all her father's unsubdued heart.

THEKLA.

I am not ill. See, I have power to stand.
Why does my mother weep? Have I alarm'd her?
It is gone by—I recollect myself—
[*She casts her eyes round the room, as seeking some one.*
Where is he? Please you, do not hide him from me.
You see I have strength enough: now I will hear him.

DUCHESS.

No, never shall this messenger of evil
Enter again into thy presence, Thekla!

THEKLA.

My father—

WALLENSTEIN.

Dearest daughter!

THEKLA.

I 'm not weak—
Shortly I shall be quite myself again.
You 'll grant me one request?

WALLENSTEIN.

Name it, my daughter.

THEKLA.

Permit the stranger to be call'd to me,
And grant me leave, that by myself I may
Hear his report and question him.

DUCHESS.

No, never!

COUNTESS.

'T is not adviseable—assent not to it.

WALLENSTEIN.

Hush! Wherefore wouldst thou speak with him, my daughter?

THEKLA.

Knowing the whole, I shall be more collected;
I will not be deceived. My mother wishes
Only to spare me. I will not be spared,
The worst is said already: I can hear
Nothing of deeper anguish!

COUNTESS *and* DUCHESS.

Do it not.

THEKLA.

The horror overpower'd me by surprise.
My heart betray'd me in the stranger's presence;
He was a witness of my weakness, yea,

I sank into his arms; and that has shamed me.
I must replace myself in his esteem,
And I must speak with him, perforce, that he,
The stranger, may not think ungently of me.

WALLENSTEIN.

I see she is in the right, and am inclined
To grant her this request of hers. Go, call him.

(LADY NEUBRUNN *goes to call him*).

DUCHESS.

But I, thy mother, will be present—

THEKLA.

'T were
More pleasing to me, if alone I saw him:
Trust me, I shall behave myself the more
Collectedly.

WALLENSTEIN.

Permit her her own will.
Leave her alone with him: for there are sorrows,
Where of necessity the soul must be
Its own support. A strong heart will rely
On its own strength alone. In her own bosom,
Not in her mother's arms, must she collect
The strength to rise superior to this blow.
It is mine own brave girl. I 'll have her treated
Not as the woman, but the heroine. [*Going.*

COUNTESS (*detaining him*).

Where art thou going? I heard Tertsky say
That 't is *thy* purpose to depart from hence
To-morrow early, but to leave us here.

WALLENSTEIN.

Yes, ye stay here, placed under the protection
Of gallant men.

COUNTESS.

O take us with you, brother!
Leave us not in this gloomy solitude
To brood o'er anxious thoughts. The mists of doubt
Magnify evils to a shape of horror.

WALLENSTEIN.

Who speaks of evil? I entreat you, sister,
Use words of better omen.

COUNTESS.

Then take us with you.
O leave us not behind you in a place
That forces us to such sad omens. Heavy
And sick within me is my heart——
These walls breathe on me, like a church-yard vault.
I cannot tell you, brother, how this place
Doth go against my nature. Take us with you.
Come, sister, join you your entreaty!—Niece,
Yours too. We all entreat you, take us with you!

WALLENSTEIN.

The place's evil omens will I change
Making it that which shields and shelters for me
My best beloved.

LADY NEUBRUNN (*returning*).

The Swedish officer.

WALLENSTEIN.

Leave her alone with me. [*Exit.*

DUCHESS (*to* THEKLA, *who starts and shivers*).

There—pale as death!—Child, 't is impossible
That thou shouldst speak with him. Follow thy mother.

THEKLA.

The Lady Neubrunn then may stay with me.

[*Exeunt* DUCHESS *and* COUNTESS.

SCENE IV.

THEKLA, THE SWEDISH CAPTAIN, LADY NEUBRUNN.

CAPTAIN (*respectfully approaching her*).

Princess— I must entreat your gentle pardon—
My inconsiderate rash speech—How could I—

THEKLA (*with dignity*).

You have beheld me in my agony.
A most distressful accident occasion'd
You from a stranger to become at once
My confidant.

CAPTAIN.

I fear you hate my presence,
For my tongue spake a melancholy word.

THEKLA.

The fault is mine. Myself did wrest it from you.
The horror which came o'er me interrupted
Your tale at its commencement. May it please you,
Continue it to the end.

CAPTAIN.

Princess, 't will
Renew your anguish.

THEKLA.

I am firm.——
I *will* be firm. Well—how began the engagement?

CAPTAIN.

We lay, expecting no attack, at Neustadt,
Entrench'd but insecurely in our camp,
When towards evening rose a cloud of dust
From the wood thitherward; our vanguard fled
Into the camp, and sounded the alarm.
Scarce had we mounted, ere the Pappenheimers,
Their horses at full speed, broke through the lines,
And leapt the trenches; but their heedless courage
Had borne them onward far before the others—
The infantry were still at distance, only
The Pappenheimers follow'd daringly
Their daring leader——

[THEKLA *betrays agitation in her gestures. The Officer pauses till she makes a sign to him to proceed.*

CAPTAIN.

Both in van and flanks
With our whole cavalry we now received them;
Back to the trenches drove them, where the foot
Stretch'd out a solid ridge of pikes to meet them.
They neither could advance, nor yet retreat;
And as they stood on every side wedged in,
The Rhine-Grave to their leader call'd aloud,
Inviting a surrender; but their leader,
Young Piccolomini——

[THEKLA, *as giddy, grasps a chair.*

Known by his plume,
And his long hair, gave signal for the trenches;
Himself leapt first, the regiment all plunged after.
His charger, by a halbert gored, rear'd up,
Flung him with violence off, and over him
The horses, now no longer to be curbed,——

[THEKLA *who has accompanied the last speech with all the marks of increasing agony, trembles, through her whole frame, and is falling. The* LADY NEUBRUNN *runs to her, and receives her in her arms.*

NEUBRUNN.

My dearest lady——

CAPTAIN.

I retire.

THEKLA.

'T is over.
Proceed to the conclusion.

CAPTAIN.

Wild despair
Inspired the troops with frenzy when they saw
Their leader perish; every thought of rescue
Was spurn'd; they fought like wounded tigers; their
Frantic resistance roused our soldiery;
A murderous fight took place, nor was the contest
Finish'd before their last man fell.

THEKLA (*faltering*).

And where——
Where is—You have not told me all.

CAPTAIN (*after a pause*).

This morning
We buried him. Twelve youths of noblest birth
Did bear him to interment; the whole army
Follow'd the bier. A laurel deck'd his coffin;
The sword of the deceased was placed upon it,
In mark of honour, by the Rhine-Grave's self.
Nor tears were wanting; for there are among us
Many, who had themselves experienced
The greatness of his mind, and gentle manners;
All were affected at his fate. The Rhine-Grave
Would willingly have saved him; but himself
Made vain the attempt—'t is said he wish'd to die.

NEUBRUNN (*to* THEKLA, *who has hidden her countenance*).

Look up, my dearest lady——

THEKLA.

Where is his grave?

CAPTAIN.

At Neustadt, lady; in a cloister church
Are his remains deposited, until
We can receive directions from his father.

THEKLA.

What is the cloister's name?

CAPTAIN.

Saint Catherine's.

THEKLA.

And how far is it thither?

CAPTAIN.

Near twelve leagues.

THEKLA.

And which the way?

CAPTAIN.

You go by Tirschenreit
And Falkenberg, through our advanced posts.

THEKLA.

Who
Is their commander?

CAPTAIN.

Colonel Seckendorf.

[THEKLA *steps to the table, and takes a ring from a casket.*

THEKLA.

You have beheld me in my agony,
And shown a feeling heart. Please you, accept
[*Giving him the ring.*
A small memorial of this hour. Now go!

CAPTAIN (*confused*).

Princess——

[THEKLA *silently makes signs to him to go, and turns from him. The* CAPTAIN *lingers, and is about to speak.* LADY NEUBRUNN *repeats the signal, and he retires.*

SCENE V.

THEKLA, LADY NEUBRUNN.

THEKLA (*falls on* LADY NEUBRUNN'S *neck*).

Now, gentle Neubrunn, show me the affection
Which thou hast ever promised—prove thyself
My own true friend and faithful fellow-pilgrim.
This night we must away!

NEUBRUNN.

Away! and whither?

THEKLA.

Whither! There is but one place in the world.
Thither where he lies buried! To his coffin!

NEUBRUNN.

What would you do there?

THEKLA.

What do there?
That wouldst thou not have ask'd, hadst thou e'er loved.
There, there is all that still remains of him.
That single spot is the whole earth to me.

NEUBRUNN.

That place of death——

THEKLA.

Is now the only place,
Where life yet dwells for me: detain me not!
Come and make preparations: let us think
Of means to fly from hence.

NEUBRUNN.

Your father's rage——

THEKLA.

That time is past——
And now I fear no human being's rage.

NEUBRUNN.

The sentence of the world! The tongue of calumny!

THEKLA.

Whom am I seeking? Him who is no more.
Am I then hastening to the arms——O God!
I haste but to the grave of the beloved.

NEUBRUNN.

And we alone, two helpless feeble women?

THEKLA.

We will take weapons: my arm shall protect thee.

NEUBRUNN.

In the dark night-time?

THEKLA.

Darkness will conceal us.

NEUBRUNN.

This rough tempestuous night——

THEKLA.

Had he a soft bed
Under the hoofs of his war-horses?

NEUBRUNN.

Heaven!
And then the many posts of the enemy!

THEKLA.

They are human beings. Misery travels free
Through the whole earth.

NEUBRUNN.

The journey's weary length—

THEKLA.

The pilgrim, travelling to a distant shrine
Of hope and healing, doth not count the leagues.

NEUBRUNN.

How can we pass the gates?

THEKLA.

Gold opens them.
Go, do but go.

NEUBRUNN.

Should we be recognized—

THEKLA.

In a despairing woman, a poor fugitive,
Will no one seek the daughter of Duke Friedland.

NEUBRUNN.

And where procure we horses for our flight?

THEKLA.

My equerry procures them. Go and fetch him.

NEUBRUNN.

Dares he, without the knowledge of his lord?

THEKLA.

He will. Go, only go. Delay no longer.

NEUBRUNN.

Dear lady! and your mother?

THEKLA.

Oh! my mother!

NEUBRUNN.

So much as she has suffer'd too already;
Your tender mother—Ah! how ill prepared
For this last anguish!

THEKLA.

Woe is me! my mother!
[*Pauses.*
Go instantly.

NEUBRUNN.

But think what you are doing!

THEKLA.

What *can* be thought, already has been thought.

NEUBRUNN.

And being there, what purpose you to do?

THEKLA.

There a Divinity will prompt my soul.

NEUBRUNN.

Your heart, dear lady, is disquieted!
And this is not the way that leads to quiet.

THEKLA.

To a deep quiet, such as he has found.
It draws me on, I know not what to name it,
Resistless does it draw me to his grave.
There will my heart be eased, my tears will flow.
O hasten, make no further questioning!
There is no rest for me till I have left
These walls—they fall in on me—A dim power
Drives me from hence—Oh mercy! What a feeling!
What pale and hollow forms are those! They fill,
They crowd the place! I have no longer room here!
Mercy! Still more! More still! The hideous swarm!
They press on me; they chase me from these walls—
Those hollow, bodiless forms of living men!

NEUBRUNN.

You frighten me so, lady, that no longer
I dare stay here myself. I go and call
Rosenberg instantly. [*Exit* LADY NEUBRUNN.

SCENE VI.

THEKLA.

His spirit 't is that calls me: 't is the troop
Of his true followers, who offer'd up
Themselves to avenge his death: and they accuse me
Of an ignoble loitering—*they* would not
Forsake their leader even in his death—*they* died for him!
And shall *I* live?—
For me too was that laurel-garland twined
That decks his bier. Life is an empty casket:
I throw it from me. O! my only hope;—
To die beneath the hoofs of trampling steeds—
That is the lot of heroes upon earth! [*Exit* THEKLA.[1]
(*The curtain drops*).

ACT V.

SCENE I.

SCENE—*A Saloon, terminated by a gallery which extends far into the back-ground.*

WALLENSTEIN (*sitting at a table*).

THE SWEDISH CAPTAIN (*standing before him*).

WALLENSTEIN.

Commend me to your lord. I sympathize
In his good fortune; and if you have seen me
Deficient in the expressions of that joy,
Which such a victory might well demand,
Attribute it to no lack of good will,
For henceforth are our fortunes one. Farewell,
And for your trouble take my thanks. To-morrow
The citadel shall be surrender'd to you
On your arrival.

[*The* SWEDISH CAPTAIN *retires.* WALLENSTEIN *sits lost in thought, his eyes fixed vacantly, and his head sustained by his hand. The* COUNTESS TERTSKY *enters, stands before him awhile, unobserved by him; at length he starts, sees her and recollects himself.*

WALLENSTEIN.

Comest thou from her? Is she restored? How is she?

COUNTESS.

My sister tells me, she was more collected
After her conversation with the Swede.
She has now retired to rest.

WALLENSTEIN.

The pang will soften,
She will shed tears.

COUNTESS.

I find thee alter'd too,
My brother! After such a victory
I had expected to have found in thee
A cheerful spirit. O remain *thou* firm!
Sustain, uphold us! For our light thou art,
Our sun.

WALLENSTEIN.

Be quiet. I ail nothing. Where 's
Thy husband?

[1] The soliloquy of Thekla consists in the original of six and twenty lines, twenty of which are in rhymes of irregular recurrence. I thought it prudent to abridge it. Indeed the whole scene between Thekla and Lady Neubrunn might, perhaps, have been omitted without injury to the play.

COUNTESS.

At a banquet—he and Illo.

WALLENSTEIN (*rises and strides across the saloon*).

The night 's far spent. Betake thee to thy chamber.

COUNTESS.

Bid me not go, O let me stay with thee!

WALLENSTEIN (*moves to the window*).

There is a busy motion in the Heaven,
The wind doth chase the flag upon the tower,
Fast sweep the clouds, the sickle[1] of the moon,
Struggling, darts snatches of uncertain light.
No form of star is visible! That one
White stain of light, that single glimmering yonder,
Is from Cassiopeia, and therein
Is Jupiter. (*A pause*). But now
The blackness of the troubled element hides him!

[*He sinks into profound melancholy, and looks vacantly into the distance.*

COUNTESS (*looks on him mournfully, then grasps his hand*).

What art thou brooding on?

WALLENSTEIN.

Methinks,
If I but saw him, 't would be well with me.
He is the star of my nativity,
And often marvellously hath his aspect
Shot strength into my heart.

COUNTESS.

Thou 'lt see him again.

WALLENSTEIN (*remains for a while with absent mind, then assumes a livelier manner, and turns suddenly to the Countess*).

See him again? O never, never again!

COUNTESS.

How?

WALLENSTEIN.

He is gone—is dust.

COUNTESS.

Whom meanest thou then?

WALLENSTEIN.

He, the more fortunate! yea, he hath finish'd!
For him there is no longer any future,
His life is bright—bright without spot it *was*,
And cannot cease to be. No ominous hour
Knocks at his door with tidings of mishap.
Far off is he, above desire and fear;
No more submitted to the change and chance
Of the unsteady planets. O 't is well
With *him!* but who knows what the coming hour
Veil'd in thick darkness brings for us?

[1] These four lines are expressed in the original with exquisite felicity.

Am Himmel ist geschæftige Bewegung,
Des Thurmes Fahne jagt der Wind, schnell geht
Der Wolken Zug, die *Mondes-Sichel wankt*,
Und durch die Nacht zuckt ungewisse Helle.

The word «moon-sickle,» reminds me of a passage in Harris, as quoted by Johnson, under the word «falcated.» «The enlightened part of the moon appears in the form of a sickle or reaping-hook, which is while she is moving from the conjunction to the opposition, or from the new moon to the full: but from full to a new again, the enlightened part appears gibbous, and the dark *falcated*.»

The words «wankeu» and «schweben» are not easily translated. The English words, by which we attempt to render them, are either vulgar or pedantic, or not of sufficiently general application. So «der Wolken Zug»—The Draft, the Procession of clouds.—The Masses of the Clouds sweep onward in swift *stream*.

COUNTESS.

Thou speakest
Of Piccolomini. What was his death?
The courier had just left thee as I came.

[WALLENSTEIN *by a motion of his hand makes signs to her to be silent.*

Turn not thine eyes upon the backward view,
Let us look forward into sunny days,
Welcome with joyous heart the victory,
Forget what it has cost thee. Not to-day,
For the first time, thy friend was to thee dead;
To thee he died, when first he parted from thee.

WALLENSTEIN.

This anguish will be wearied down,[1] I know;
What pang is permanent with man? From the highest,
As from the vilest thing of every day
He learns to wean himself: for the strong hours
Conquer him. Yet I feel what I have lost
In him. The bloom is vanish'd from my life.
For O! he stood beside me, like my youth,
Transform'd for me the real to a dream,
Clothing the palpable and the familiar
With golden exhalations of the dawn.
Whatever fortunes wait my future toils,
The *beautiful* is vanish'd—and returns not.

COUNTESS.

O be not treacherous to thy own power.
Thy heart is rich enough to vivify
Itself. Thou lovest and prizest virtues in him,
The which thyself didst plant, thyself unfold.

WALLENSTEIN (*stepping to the door*).

Who interrupts us now at this late hour?
It is the Governor. He brings the keys
Of the Citadel. 'T is midnight. Leave me, sister!

COUNTESS.

O 't is so hard to me this night to leave thee—
A boding fear possesses me!

WALLENSTEIN.

Fear? Wherefore?

COUNTESS.

Shouldst thou depart this night, and we at waking
Never more find thee!

WALLENSTEIN.

Fancies!

COUNTESS.

O my soul
Has long been weigh'd down by these dark forebodings.
And if I combat and repel them waking,
They still rush down upon my heart in dreams,
I saw thee yesternight with thy first wife
Sit at a banquet gorgeously attired.

WALLENSTEIN.

This was a dream of favourable omen,
That marriage being the founder of my fortunes.

COUNTESS.

To-day I dreamt that I was seeking thee
In thy own chamber. As I enter'd, lo!
It was no more a chamber: the Chartreuse
At Gitschin 't was, which thou thyself hast founded,

[1] A very inadequate translation of the original.

Verschmerzen werd' ich diesen Schlag, das weiss ich,
Denn was verschmerzte nicht der Mensch!

LITERALLY.

I shall *grieve down* this blow, of that I 'm conscious:
What does not man grieve down?

And where it is thy will that thou shouldst be
Interr'd.

WALLENSTEIN.

Thy soul is busy with these thoughts.

COUNTESS.

What! dost thou not believe that oft in dreams
A voice of warning speaks prophetic to us?

WALLENSTEIN.

There is no doubt that there exist such voices.
Yet I would not call *them*
Voices of warning that announce to us
Only the inevitable. As the sun,
Ere it is risen, sometimes paints its image
In the atmosphere, so often do the spirits
Of great events stride on before the events,
And in to-day already walks to-morrow.
That which we read of the fourth Henry's death
Did ever vex and haunt me like a tale
Of my own future destiny. The king
Felt in his breast the phantom of the knife,
Long ere Ravaillac arm'd himself therewith.
His quiet mind forsook him: the phantasma
Started him in his Louvre, chased him forth
Into the open air: like funeral knells
Sounded that coronation festival;
And still with boding sense he heard the tread
Of those feet that even then were seeking him
Throughout the streets of Paris.

COUNTESS.

And to *thee*.
The voice within thy soul bodes nothing?

WALLENSTEIN.

Nothing.
Be wholly tranquil.

COUNTESS.

And another time
I hasten'd after thee, and thou ran'st from me
Through a long suite, through many a spacious hall,
There seem'd no end of it: doors creak'd and clapp'd;
I follow'd panting, but could not o'ertake thee;
When on a sudden did I feel myself
Grasp'd from behind—the hand was cold, that grasp'd me—
'T was thou, and thou didst kiss me, and there seem'd
A crimson covering to envelop us.

WALLENSTEIN.

That is the crimson tapestry of my chamber.

COUNTESS (*gazing on him*).

If it should come to that—if I should see thee,
Who standest now before me in the fulness
Of life— [*She falls on his breast and weeps.*

WALLENSTEIN.

The Emperor's proclamation weighs upon thee—
Alphabets wound not—and he finds no hands.

COUNTESS.

If he *should* find them, my resolve is taken—
I bear about me my support and refuge.
[*Exit* COUNTESS.

SCENE II.

WALLENSTEIN, GORDON.

WALLENSTEIN.

All quiet in the town?

GORDON.

The town is quiet.

WALLENSTEIN.

I hear a boisterous music! and the Castle
Is lighted up. Who are the revellers?

GORDON.

There is a banquet given at the Castle
To the Count Tertsky, and Field Marshal Illo.

WALLENSTEIN.

In honour of the victory—This tribe
Can show their joy in nothing else but feasting.
[*Rings. The* GROOM OF THE CHAMBER *enters.*
Unrobe me. I will lay me down to sleep.
[WALLENSTEIN *takes the keys from* GORDON.
So we are guarded from all enemies,
And shut in with sure friends.
For all must cheat me, or a face like this
[*Fixing his eye on* GORDON.
Was ne'er a hypocrite's mask.
[*The* GROOM OF THE CHAMBER *takes off his mantle, collar, and scarf.*

WALLENSTEIN.

Take care—what is that?

GROOM OF THE CHAMBER.

The golden chain is snapped in two.

WALLENSTEIN.

Well, it has lasted long enough. Here—give it.
[*He takes and looks at the chain.*
'T was the first present of the Emperor.
He hung it round me in the war of Friule,
He being then Archduke; and I have worn it
Till now from habit——
From superstition, if you will. Belike,
It was to be a Talisman to me;
And while I wore it on my neck in faith,
It was to chain to me all my life long
The volatile fortune, whose first pledge it was.
Well, be it so! Henceforward a new fortune
Must spring up for me; for the potency
Of this charm is dissolved.
[GROOM OF THE CHAMBER *retires with the vestments.* WALLENSTEIN *rises, takes a stride across the room, and stands at last before* GORDON *in a posture of meditation.*
How the old time returns upon me! I
Behold myself once more at Burgau, where
We two were Pages of the Court together.
We oftentimes disputed: thy intention
Was ever good; but thou wert wont to play
The Moralist and Preacher, and wouldst rail at me—
That I strove after things too high for me,
Giving my faith to bold unlawful dreams,
And still extol to me the golden mean.
—Thy wisdom hath been proved a thriftless friend
To thy own self. See, it has made thee early
A superannuated man, and (but
That my munificent stars will intervene)
Would let thee in some miserable corner
Go out like an untended lamp.

GORDON.

My Prince!
With light heart the poor fisher moors his boat,
And watches from the shore the lofty ship
Stranded amid the storm.

WALLENSTEIN.

Art thou already

In harbour then, old man? Well! I am not.
The unconquer'd spirit drives me o'er life's billows;
My planks still firm, my canvas swelling proudly.
Hope is my goddess still, and Youth my inmate;
And while we stand thus front to front almost,
I might presume to say, that the swift years
Have passed by powerless o'er my unblanched hair.

[*He moves with long strides across the Saloon, and remains on the opposite side over-against* GORDON.

Who now persists in calling Fortune false?
To me she has proved faithful, with fond love
Took me from out the common ranks of men,
And like a mother goddess, with strong arm
Carried me swiftly up the steps of life.
Nothing is common in my destiny,
Nor in the furrows of my hand. Who dares
Interpret then my life for me as 't were
One of the undistinguishable many?
True in this present moment I appear
Fallen low indeed; but I shall rise again.
The high flood will soon follow on this ebb;
The fountain of my fortune, which now stops
Repress'd and bound by some malicious star,
Will soon in joy play forth from all its pipes.

GORDON.

And yet remember I the good old proverb,
« Let the night come before we praise the day. »
I would be slow from long continued fortune
To gather hope: for Hope is the companion
Given to the unfortunate by pitying Heaven,
Fear hovers round the head of prosperous men:
For still unsteady are the scales of fate.

WALLENSTEIN (*smiling*).

I hear the very Gordon that of old
Was wont to preach to me, now once more preaching;
I know well, that all sublunary things
Are still the vassals of vicissitude.
The unpropitious gods demand their tribute.
This long ago the ancient Pagans knew:
And therefore of their own accord they offer'd
To themselves injuries, so to atone
The jealousy of their divinities:
And human sacrifices bled to Typhon.

[*After a pause, serious, and in a more subdued manner.*

I too have sacrificed to him—For me
There fell the dearest friend, and through my fault
He fell! No joy from favourable fortune
Can overweigh the anguish of this stroke.
The envy of my destiny is glutted:
Life pays for life. On his pure head the lightning
Was drawn off which would else have shatter'd *me*.

SCENE III.

To these enter SENI.

WALLENSTEIN.

Is not that Seni? and beside himself,
If one may trust his looks? What brings thee hither
At this late hour, Baptista?

SENI.

Terror, Duke!
On thy account.

WALLENSTEIN.

What now?

SENI.

Flee ere the day-break!
Trust not thy person to the Swedes!

WALLENSTEIN.

What now
Is in thy thoughts?

SENI (*with louder voice*).

Trust not thy person to these Swedes.

WALLENSTEIN.

What is it then?

SENI (*still more urgently*).

O wait not the arrival of these Swedes!
An evil near at hand is threatening thee
From false friends. All the signs stand full of horror!
Near, near at hand the net-work of perdition—
Yea, even now 't is being cast around thee!

WALLENSTEIN.

Baptista, thou art dreaming!—Fear befools thee.

SENI.

Believe not that an empty fear deludes me.
Come, read it in the planetary aspects;
Read it thyself, that ruin threatens thee
From false friends!

WALLENSTEIN.

From the falseness of my friends
Has risen the whole of my unprosperous fortunes.
The warning should have come before! At present
I need no revelation from the stars
To know that.

SENI.

Come and see! trust thine own eyes!
A fearful sign stands in the house of life—
An enemy; a fiend lurks close behind
The radiance of thy planet.—O be warn'd!
Deliver not thyself up to these heathens,
To wage a war against our holy church.

WALLENSTEIN (*laughing gently*).

The oracle rails that way! Yes, yes! Now
I recollect. This junction with the Swedes
Did never please thee—lay thyself to sleep,
Baptista! Signs like these I do not fear.

GORDON (*who during the whole of this dialogue has shown marks of extreme agitation, and now turns to* WALLENSTEIN).

My Duke and General! May I dare presume?

WALLENSTEIN.

Speak freely.

GORDON.

What if 't were no mere creation
Of fear, if God's high providence vouchsafed
To interpose its aid for your deliverance,
And made that mouth its organ?

WALLENSTEIN.

Ye 're both feverish!
How can mishap come to me from the Swedes?
They sought this junction with me—'t is their interest.

GORDON (*with difficulty suppressing his emotion*).

But what if the arrival of these Swedes—
What if this were the very thing that wing'd
The ruin that is flying to your temples?

[*Flings himself at his feet.*

There is yet time, my Prince.

SENI.

O hear him! hear him!

GORDON (*rises*).

The Rhine-Grave 's still far off. Give but the orders,
This citadel shall close its gates upon him.
If then he will besiege us, let him try it.
But this I say; he 'll find his own destruction
With his whole force before these ramparts, sooner
Than weary down the valour of our spirit.
He shall experience what a band of heroes,
Inspirited by an heroic leader,
Is able to perform. And if indeed
It be thy serious wish to make amend
For that which thou hast done amiss,—this, this
Will touch and reconcile the Emperor
Who gladly turns his heart to thoughts of mercy,
And Friedland, who returns repentant to him,
Will stand yet higher in his Emperor's favour,
Than e'er he stood when he had never fallen.

WALLENSTEIN (*contemplates him with surprise, remains silent awhile, betraying strong emotion*).

Gordon—your zeal and fervour lead you far.
Well, well—an old friend has a privilege.
Blood, Gordon, has been flowing. Never, never
Can the Emperor pardon me: and if he could,
Yet I—I ne'er could let myself be pardon'd.
Had I foreknown what now has taken place,
That he, my dearest friend, would fall for me,
My first death-offering: and had the heart
Spoken to me, as now it has done—Gordon,
It may be, I might have bethought myself.
It may be too, I might not. Might or might not,
Is now an idle question. All too seriously
Has it begun to end in nothing, Gordon!
Let it then have its course.

[*Stepping to the window.*

All dark and silent—at the castle too
All is now hush'd—Light me, Chamberlain!

[*The* GROOM OF THE CHAMBER, *who had entered during the last dialogue, and had been standing at a distance and listening to it with visible expressions of the deepest interest, advances in extreme agitation, and throws himself at the* DUKE'S *feet.*

And thou too! But I know why thou dost wish
My reconcilement with the Emperor.
Poor man! he hath a small estate in Cærnthen,
And fears it will be forfeited because
He 's in my service. Am I then so poor,
That I no longer can indemnify
My servants? Well! to no one I employ
Means of compulsion. If 't is thy belief
That fortune has fled from me, go! forsake me.
This night for the last time mayst thou unrobe me,
And then go over to thy Emperor.
Gordon, good night! I think to make a long
Sleep of it: for the struggle and the turmoil
Of this last day or two was great. May 't please you!
Take care that they awake me not too early.

[*Exit* WALLENSTEIN, *the* GROOM OF THE CHAMBER *lighting him.* SENI *follows,* GORDON *remains on the darkened stage, following the* DUKE *with his eye, till he disappears at the farther end of the gallery: then by his gestures the old man expresses the depth of his anguish, and stands leaning against a pillar.*

SCENE IV.

GORDON, BUTLER (*at first behind the scenes*).

BUTLER (*not yet come into view of the stage*).

Here stand in silence till I give the signal.

GORDON (*starts up*).

'T is he, he has already brought the murderers.

BUTLER.

The lights are out. All lies in profound sleep.

GORDON.

What shall I do, shall I attempt to save him?
Shall I call up the house? Alarm the guards?

BUTLER (*appears, but scarcely on the stage*).

A light gleams hither from the corridor.
It leads directly to the Duke's bed-chamber.

GORDON.

But then I break my oath to the Emperor;
If he escape and strengthen the enemy,
Do I not hereby call down on my head
All the dread consequences?

BUTLER (*stepping forward*).

Hark! Who speaks there!

GORDON.

'T is better, I resign it to the hands
Of providence. For what am I, that *I*
Should take upon myself so great a deed?
I have not murder'd him, if he be murder'd;
But all his rescue were *my* act and deed;
Mine—and whatever be the consequences,
I must sustain them.

BUTLER (*advances*).

I should know that voice.

GORDON.

Butler!

BUTLER.

'T is Gordon. What do *you* want here?
Was it so late then, when the Duke dismiss'd you?

GORDON.

Your hand bound up and in a scarf?

BUTLER.

'T is wounded.
That Illo fought as he was frantic, till
At last we threw him on the ground.

GORDON (*shuddering*).

Both dead?

BUTLER.

Is he in bed?

GORDON.

Ah, Butler!

BUTLER.

Is he? speak.

GORDON.

He shall *not* perish! Not through you! The Heaven
Refuses *your* arm. See—'t is wounded!—

BUTLER.

There is no need of *my* arm.

GORDON.

The most guilty
Have perish'd, and enough is given to justice.

[*The* GROOM OF THE CHAMBER *advances from the gallery with his finger on his mouth, commanding silence.*

GORDON.

He sleeps! O murder not the holy sleep!

BUTLER.

No! he shall die awake. [*Is going.*

GORDON.

His heart still cleaves
To earthly things: he's not prepared to step
Into the presence of his God!

BUTLER (*going*).

God 's merciful!

GORDON (*holds him*).

Grant him but this night's respite.

BUTLER (*hurrying off*).

The next moment
May ruin all.

GORDON (*holds him still*).

One hour!——

BUTLER.

Unhold me! What
Can that short respite profit him?

GORDON.

O—Time
Works miracles. In one hour many thousands
Of grains of sand run out; and quick as they,
Thought follows thought within the human soul.
Only one hour! *Your* heart may change its purpose,
His heart may change its purpose—some new tidings
May come; some fortunate event, decisive,
May fall from Heaven and rescue him. O what
May not one hour achieve!

BUTLER.

You but remind me,
How precious every minute is!

[*He stamps on the floor.*

SCENE V.

To these enter MACDONALD, *and* DEVEREUX, *with the* HALBERDIERS.

GORDON (*throwing himself between him and them*).

No, monster!
First over my dead body thou shalt tread.
I will not live to see the accursed deed!

BUTLER (*forcing him out of the way*).

Weak-hearted dotard!

[*Trumpets are heard in the distance.*

DEVEREUX *and* MACDONALD.

Hark! The Swedish trumpets!
The Swedes before the ramparts! Let us hasten!

GORDON (*rushes out*).

O, God of Mercy!

BUTLER (*calling after him*).

Governor, to your post!

GROOM OF THE CHAMBER (*hurries in*).

Who dares make larum here? Hush! The Duke sleeps.

DEVEREUX (*with loud harsh voice*).

Friend, it is time now to make larum.

GROOM OF THE CHAMBER.

Help!
Murder!

BUTLER.

Down with him!

GROOM OF THE CHAMBER (*run through the body by* DEVEREUX, *falls at the entrance of the gallery.*)

Jesus Maria!

BUTLER.

Burst the doors open.

[*They rush over the body into the gallery—two doors are heard to crash one after the other—Voices deadened by the distance—Clash of arms—then all at once a profound silence.*

SCENE VI.

COUNTESS TERTSKY (*with a light*).

Her bed-chamber is empty; she herself
Is no where to be found! The Neubrunn too,
Who watch'd by her, is missing. If she should
Be flown——But whither flown? We must call up
Every soul in the house. How will the Duke
Bear up against these worst bad tidings? O
If that my husband now were but return'd
Home from the banquet!—Hark! I wonder whether
The Duke is still awake! I thought I heard
Voices and tread of feet here! I will go
And listen at the door. Hark! what is that?
'T is hastening up the steps!

SCENE VII.

COUNTESS, GORDON.

GORDON (*rushes in out of breath*).

'T is a mistake!
'T is not the Swedes—Ye must proceed no further—
Butler!—O God! where is he?

GORDON (*observing the* COUNTESS).

Countess! Say——

COUNTESS.

You are come then from the castle? Where 's my husband?

GORDON (*in an agony of affright*).

Your husband!—Ask not!—To the Duke——

COUNTESS.

Not till
You have discover'd to me——

GORDON.

On this moment
Does the world hang. For God's sake! to the Duke.
While we are speaking——

[*Calling loudly.*

Butler! Butler! God!

COUNTESS.

Why, he is at the castle with my husband.

[BUTLER *comes from the Gallery.*

GORDON.

'T was a mistake—'T is not the Swedes—it is
The Imperialist's Lieutenant-General
Has sent me hither—will be here himself
Instantly.—You must not proceed.

BUTLER.

He comes
Too late. [GORDON *dashes himself against the wall.*

GORDON.

O God of mercy!

COUNTESS.

What too late?
Who will be here himself? Octavio
In Egra? Treason! Treason!—Where 's the Duke?

[*She rushes to the Gallery.*

SCENE VIII.

(Servants run across the Stage full of terror. The whole Scene must be spoken entirely without pauses.)

SENI (*from the Gallery*).

O bloody frightful deed!

COUNTESS.

What is it, Seni?

PAGE (*from the Gallery*).

O piteous sight!

[*Other Servants hasten in with torches.*

COUNTESS.

What is it? For God's sake!

SENI.

And do *you* ask?
Within the Duke lies murder'd—and your husband
Assassinated at the Castle.

[*The* COUNTESS *stands motionless.*

FEMALE SERVANT (*rushing across the stage*).

Help! help! the Duchess!

BURGOMASTER (*enters*).

What mean these confused
Loud cries, that wake the sleepers of this house?

GORDON.

Your house is cursed to all eternity.
In your house doth the Duke lie murder'd!

BURGOMASTER (*rushing out*).

Heaven forbid!

FIRST SERVANT.

Fly! fly! they murder us all!

SECOND SERVANT (*carrying silver plate*).

That way! The lower
Passages are block'd up.

VOICE (*from behind the Scene*).

Make room for the Lieutenant-General!

[*At these words the* COUNTESS *starts from her stupor, collects herself, and retires suddenly.*

VOICE (*from behind the Scene*).

Keep back the people! Guard the door!

SCENE IX.

To these enters OCTAVIO PICCOLOMINI *with all his Train. At the same time* DEVEREUX *and* MACDONALD *enter from out the Corridor with the Halberdiers.—*WALLENSTEIN'S *dead Body is carried over the back part of the Stage, wrapped in a piece of crimson tapestry.*

OCTAVIO (*entering abruptly*).

It must not be! It is not possible!
Butler! Gordon!
I 'll not believe it. Say no!

[GORDON, *without answering, points with his hand to the Body of* WALLENSTEIN *as it is carried over the back of the Stage.* OCTAVIO *looks that way, and stands overpowered with horror.*

DEVEREUX (*to* BUTLER).

Here is the golden fleece—the Duke's sword—

MACDONALD.

Is it your order—

BUTLER (*pointing to* OCTAVIO).

Here stands he who now
Hath the sole power to issue orders.

[DEVEREUX *and* MACDONALD *retire with marks of obeisance. One drops away after the other, till only* BUTLER, OCTAVIO, *and* GORDON *remain on the stage.*

OCTAVIO (*turning to* BUTLER).

Was that my purpose, Butler, when we parted?
O God of Justice!
To thee I lift my hand! I am not guilty
Of this foul deed.

BUTLER.

Your *hand* is pure. You have
Avail'd yourself of mine.

OCTAVIO.

Merciless man!
Thus to abuse the orders of thy Lord—
And stain thy Emperor's holy name with murder,
With bloody, most accursed assassination?

BUTLER (*calmly*).

I 've but fulfilled the Emperor's own sentence.

OCTAVIO.

O curse of Kings,
Infusing a dread life into their words,
And linking to the sudden transient thought
The unchangeable irrevocable deed.
Was there necessity for such an eager
Despatch? Couldst thou not grant the merciful
A time for mercy? Time is man's good Angel.
To leave no interval between the sentence,
And the fulfilment of it, doth beseem
God only, the immutable!

BUTLER.

For what
Rail you against me? What is my offence?
The Empire from a fearful enemy
Have I deliver'd, and expect reward.
The single difference betwixt you and me
Is this: you placed the arrow in the bow;
I pull'd the string. You sow'd blood, and yet stand
Astonish'd that blood is come up. I always
Knew what I did, and therefore no result
Hath power to frighten or surprise my spirit.
Have you aught else to order; for this instant
I make my best speed to Vienna; place
My bleeding sword before my Emperor's Throne,
And hope to gain the applause which undelaying
And punctual obedience may demand
From a just judge. [*Exit* BUTLER.

SCENE X.

To these enter the COUNTESS TERTSKY, *pale and disordered. Her utterance is slow and feeble, and unimpassioned.*

OCTAVIO (*meeting her*).

O Countess Tertsky! These are the results
Of luckless unblest deeds.

COUNTESS.

They are the fruits
Of your contrivances. The Duke is dead,
My husband too is dead, the Duchess struggles
In the pangs of death, my niece has disappear'd.
This house of splendour, and of princely glory,
Doth now stand desolated: the affrighted servants
Rush forth through all its doors. I am the last
Therein; I shut it up, and here deliver
The keys.

OCTAVIO (*with a deep anguish*).

O Countess! my house too is desolate.

COUNTESS.

Who next is to be murder'd? Who is next
To be maltreated? Lo! the Duke is dead.
The Emperor's vengeance may be pacified!
Spare the old servants; let not their fidelity
Be imputed to the faithful as a crime—

The evil destiny surprised my brother
Too suddenly: he could not think on them.

OCTAVIO.

Speak not of vengeance! Speak not of maltreatment!
The Emperor is appeased; the heavy fault
Hath heavily been expiated—nothing
Descended from the father to the daughter,
Exeept his glory and his serviees.
The Empress honours your adversity,
Takes part in your afflietions, opens to you
Her motherly arms! Therefore no farther fears;
Yield yourself up in hope and eonfidence
To the Imperial Grace!

COUNTESS (*with her eye raised to heaven*).

To the graee and mercy of a greater Master
Do I yield up myself. Where shall the body
Of the Duke have its plaee of final rest?
In the Chartreuse, whieh he himself did found
At Gitsehin, rest the Countess Wallenstein;
And by her side, to whom he was indebted
For his first fortunes, gratefully he wish'd
He might sometime repose in death! O let him
Be buried there. And likewise, for my husband's
Remains, I ask the like grace. The Emperor
Is now proprietor of all our Castles.
This sure may well be granted us—one sepulehre
Beside the sepulehres of our forefathers!

OCTAVIO.

Countess, you tremble, you turn pale!

COUNTESS (*reassembles all her powers, and speaks with energy and dignity*).

You think
More worthily of me, than to believe
I would survive the downfal of my house.
We did not hold ourselves too mean to grasp
After a monarch's erown—the erown did fate
Deny, but not the feeling and the spirit
That to the erown belong! We deem a
Courageous death more worthy of our free station
Than a dishonour'd life.—I have taken poison.

OCTAVIO.

Help! Help! Support her!

COUNTESS.

Nay, it is too late.
In a few moments is my fate aecomplish'd.

[*Exit* COUNTESS.

GORDON.

O house of death and horrors!

[*An* OFFICER *enters, and brings a letter with the great seal.*

GORDON (*steps forward and meets him*).

What is this?
It is the Imperial Seal.

[*He reads the Address, and delivers the letter to* OCTAVIO *with a look of reproach, and with an emphasis on the word.*

To the *Prince* Piceolomini.

[OCTAVIO *with his whole frame expressive of sudden anguish, raises his eyes to heaven.*

(*The Curtain drops.*)

The Fall of Robespierre;

AN HISTORIC DRAMA.

DEDICATION.

TO H. MARTIN, ESQ.

OF JESUS COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

DEAR SIR,

ACCEPT, as a small testimony of my grateful attaehment, the following Dramatic Poem, in which I have endeavoured to detail, in an interesting form, the fall of a man, whose great bad aetions have cast a disastrous lustre on his name. In the exeeution of the work, as intrieacy of plot could not have been attempted without a gross violation of reeent faets, it has been my sole aim to imitate the impassioned and highly figurative language of the French Orators, and to develop the charaeters of the chief aetors on a vast stage of horrors.

Yours fraternally,

S. T. COLERIDGE.

JESUS COLLEGE, *September* 22, 1794.

THE FALL OF ROBESPIERRE.

ACT I.

SCENE, *The Tuilleries.*

BARRERE.

The tempest gathers—be it mine to seek
A friendly shelter, ere it bursts upon him.
But where? and how? I fear the Tyrant's *soul*—
Sudden in aetion, fertile in resouree,
And rising awful 'mid impending ruins;
In splendour gloomy, as the midnight meteor,
That fearless thwarts the elemental war.
When last in seeret conferenee we met,
He seowl'd upon me with suspieious rage,
Making his eye the inmate of my bosom.
I know he scorns me—and I feel, I hate him—
Yet there is in him that whieh makes me tremble!

[*Exit.*

Enter TALLIEN *and* LEGENDRE.

TALLIEN.

It was Barrere, Legendre! didst thou mark him?
Abrupt he turn'd, yet linger'd as he went,
And towards us cast a look of doubtful meaning.

LEGENDRE.

I mark'd him well. I met his eye's last glance;
It menaced not so proudly as of yore.
Methought he would have spoke—but that he dared not—
Such agitation darken'd on his brow.

TALLIEN.

'T was all distrusting guilt that kept from bursting
Th' imprison'd secret struggling in the face:
E'en as the sudden breeze upstarting onwards
Hurries the thunder-cloud, that poised awhile
Hung in mid air, red with its mutinous burthen.

LEGENDRE.

Perfidious Traitor!—still afraid to bask
In the full blaze of power, the rustling serpent
Lurks in the thicket of the Tyrant's greatness,
Ever prepared to sting who shelters him.
Each thought, each action in himself converges;
And love and friendship on his coward heart
Shine like the powerless sun on polar ice:
To all attach'd, by turns deserting all,
Cunning and dark—a necessary villain!

TALLIEN.

Yet much depends upon him—well you know
With plausible harangue 't is his to paint
Defeat like victory—and blind the mob
With truth-mix'd falsehood. They, led on by him,
And wild of head to work their own destruction,
Support with uproar what he plans in darkness.

LEGENDRE.

O what a precious name is Liberty
To scare or cheat the simple into slaves!
Yes—we must gain him over: by dark hints
We 'll show enough to rouse his watchful fears,
Till the cold coward blaze a patriot.
O Danton! murder'd friend! assist my counsels—
Hover around me on sad memory's wings,
And pour thy daring vengeance in my heart.
Tallien! if but to-morrow's fateful sun
Beholds the Tyrant living—we are dead!

TALLIEN.

Yet his keen eye that flashes mighty meanings—

LEGENDRE.

Fear not—or rather fear th' alternative,
And seek for courage e'en in cowardice.——
But see—hither he comes—let us away!
His brother with him, and the bloody Couthon,
And high of haughty spirit, young St-Just.

[*Exeunt.*

Enter ROBESPIERRE, COUTHON, ST-JUST, *and* ROBESPIERRE JUNIOR.

ROBESPIERRE.

What! did La Fayette fall before my power?
And did I conquer Roland's spotless virtues?
The fervent eloquence of Vergniaud's tongue?
And Brissot's thoughtful soul unbribed and bold?
Did zealot armies haste in vain to save them?
What! did th' assassin's dagger aim its point
Vain, as a *dream* of murder, at my bosom?
And shall I dread the soft luxurious Tallien?
Th' Adonis Tallien? banquet-hunting Tallien?
Him, whose heart flutters at the dice-box? Him,
Who ever on the harlots' downy pillow
Resigns his head impure to feverish slumbers!

ST-JUST.

I cannot fear him—yet we must not scorn him.
Was it not Antony that conquer'd Brutus,
Th' Adonis, banquet-hunting Antony?
The state is not yet purified: and though
The stream runs clear, yet at the bottom lies
The thick black sediment of all the factions—
It needs no magic hand to stir it up!

COUTHON.

O we did wrong to spare them—fatal error!
Why lived Legendre, when that Danton died?
And Collot d'Herbois dangerous in crimes?
I've fear'd him, since his iron heart endured
To make of Lyons one vast human shambles,
Compared with which the sun-scorch'd wilderness
Of Zara were a smiling paradise.

ST-JUST.

Rightly thou judgest, Couthon! He is one,
Who flies from silent solitary anguish,
Seeking forgetful peace amid the jar
Of elements. The howl of maniac uproar
Lulls to sad sleep the memory of himself.
A calm is fatal to him—then he feels
The dire upboilings of the storm within him.
A tiger mad with inward wounds!——I dread
The fierce and restless turbulence of guilt.

ROBESPIERRE.

Is not the commune ours? The stern tribunal?
Dumas? and Vivier? Fleuriot? and Louvet?
And Henriot? We 'll denounce a hundred, nor
Shall they behold to-morrow's sun roll westward.

ROBESPIERRE JUNIOR.

Nay—I am sick of blood; my aching heart
Reviews the long, long train of hideous horrors
That still have gloom'd the rise of the republic.
I should have died before Toulon, when war
Became the patriot!

ROBESPIERRE.

Most unworthy wish!
He, whose heart sickens at the blood of traitors,
Would be himself a traitor, were he not
A coward! 'T is congenial souls alone
Shed tears of sorrow for each other's fate.
O thou art brave, my brother! and thine eye
Full firmly shines amid the groaning battle—
Yet in thine heart the woman-form of pity
Asserts too large a share, an ill-timed guest!
There is unsoundness in the state—To-morrow
Shall see it cleansed by wholesome massacre!

ROBESPIERRE JUNIOR.

Beware! already do the sections murmur—
« O the great glorious patriot, Robespierre—
The *tyrant guardian* of the country's *freedom!*»

COUTHON.

'T were folly sure to work great deeds by halves!
Much I suspect the darksome fickle heart
Of cold Barrere!

ROBESPIERRE.

I see the villain in him!

ROBESPIERRE JUNIOR.

If he—if all forsake thee—what remains?

ROBESPIERRE.

Myself! the steel-strong Rectitude of soul
And Poverty sublime 'mid circling virtues!
The giant Victories, my counsels form'd,
Shall stalk around me with sun-glittering plumes,
Bidding the darts of calumny fall pointless.

[*Exeunt cæteri. Manet* COUTHON.

COUTHON (*solus*).

So we deceive ourselves! What goodly virtues
Bloom on the poisonous branches of ambition!
Still, Robespierre! thou 'lt guard thy country's freedom
To despotize in all the patriot's pomp.
While Conscience, 'mid the mob's applauding clamours,
Sleeps in thine ear, nor whispers—blood-stain'd tyrant!
Yet what is Conscience? Superstition's dream,
Making such deep impression on our sleep—
That long th' awaken'd breast retains its horrors!
But he returns—and with him comes Barrere.

[*Exit* COUTHON.

Enter ROBESPIERRE *and* BARRERE.

ROBESPIERRE.

There is no danger but in cowardice.—
Barrere! we *make* the danger, when we *fear* it.
We have such force without, as will suspend
The cold and trembling treachery of these members.

BARRERE.

'T will be a pause of terror.—

ROBESPIERRE.

But to whom?
Rather the short-lived slumber of the tempest,
Gathering its strength anew. The dastard traitors!
Moles, that would undermine the rooted oak!
A pause!—a *moment's* pause!—'T is all *their life.*

BARRERE.

Yet much they talk—and plausible their speech.
Couthon's decree has given such powers, that—

ROBESPIERRE.

That what?

BARRERE.

The freedom of debate—

ROBESPIERRE.

Transparent mask!
They wish to clog the wheels of government,
Forcing the hand that guides the vast machine
To bribe them to their duty—*English* patriots!
Are not the congregated clouds of war
Black all around us? In our very vitals
Works not the king-bred poison of rebellion?
Say, what shall counteract the selfish plottings
Of wretches, cold of heart, nor awed by fears
Of him, whose power directs th' eternal justice?
Terror? or secret-sapping gold? The first
Heavy, but transient as the ills that cause it;
And to the virtuous patriot rendered light
By the necessities that gave it birth:
The other fouls the fount of the republic,
Making it flow polluted to all ages:
Inoculates the state with a slow venom,
That, once imbibed, must be continued ever.
Myself incorruptible, I ne'er could bribe them—
Therefore they hate me.

BARRERE.

Are the sections friendly?

ROBESPIERRE.

There are who wish my ruin—but I 'll make them
Blush for the crime in blood!

BARRERE.

Nay—but I tell thee,
Thou art too fond of slaughter—and the right
(If right it be) workest by most foul means!

ROBESPIERRE.

Self-centering Fear! how well thou canst ape *Mercy!*
Too fond of slaughter!—matchless hypocrite!
Thought Barrere so, when Brissot, Danton died?
Thought Barrere so, when through the streaming streets
Of Paris red-eyed Massacre o'er-wearied
Reel'd heavily, intoxicate with blood?
And when (O heavens!) in Lyons' death-red square
Sick fancy groan'd o'er putrid hills of slain,
Didst thou not fiercely laugh, and bless the day?
Why, thou hast been the mouth-piece of all horrors,
And, like a blood-hound, crouch'd for murder! Now
Aloof thou standest from the tottering pillar,
Or, like a frighted child behind its mother,
Hidest thy pale face in the skirts of—*Mercy!*

BARRERE.

O prodigality of eloquent anger!
Why now I see thou 'rt weak—thy case is desperate!
The cool ferocious Robespierre turn'd scolder!

ROBESPIERRE.

Who from a bad man's bosom wards the blow
Reserves the whetted dagger for his own.
Denounced twice—and twice I saved his life!

[*Exit.*

BARRERE.

The sections will support then—there 's the point?
No! he can never weather out the storm—
Yet he is sudden in revenge—No more!
I must away to Tallien. [*Exit.*

SCENE *changes to the house of* ADELAIDE.

ADELAIDE *enters, speaking to a* SERVANT.

ADELAIDE.

Didst thou present the letter that I gave thee!
Did Tallien answer, he would soon return?

SERVANT.

He is in the Tuilleries—with him Legendre—
In deep discourse they seem'd: as I approach'd
He waved his hand as bidding me retire:
I did not interrupt him. [*Returns the letter.*

ADELAIDE.

Thou didst rightly.

[*Exit* SERVANT.

O this new freedom! at how dear a price
We 've bought the seeming good! The peaceful virtues,
And every blandishment of private life,
The father's cares, the mother's fond endearment,
All sacrificed to liberty's wild riot.
The winged hours, that scatter'd roses round me,
Languid and sad drag their slow course along,
And shake big gall-drops from their heavy wings.
But I will steal away these anxious thoughts
By the soft languishment of warbled airs,
If haply melodies may lull the sense
Of sorrow for a while.

(*Soft Music*).

Enter TALLIEN.

TALLIEN.

Music, my love? O breathe again that air!
Soft nurse of pain, it soothes the weary soul
Of care, sweet as the whisper'd breeze of evening
That plays around the sick man's throbbing temples.

SONG.

Tell me, on what holy ground
May domestic peace be found?
Halcyon daughter of the skies,
Far on fearful wing she flies,
From the pomp of sceptred state,
From the rebel's noisy hate.

In a cottaged vale she dwells,
List'ning to the Sabbath bells!
Still around her steps are seen
Spotless honour's meeker mien,
Love, the fire of pleasing fears,
Sorrow smiling through her tears;
And, conscious of the past employ,
Memory, bosom-spring of joy.

TALLIEN.

I thank thee, Adelaide! 't was sweet, though mournful.
But why thy brow o'ercast, thy cheek so wan?
Thou look'st as a lorn maid beside some stream
That sighs away the soul in fond despairing,
While sorrow sad, like the dank willow near her,
Hangs o'er the troubled fountain of her eye.

ADELAIDE.

Ah! rather let me ask what mystery lowers
On Tallien's darken'd brow. Thou dost me wrong—
Thy soul distemper'd, can my heart be tranquil?

TALLIEN.

Tell me, by whom thy brother's blood was spilt?
Asks he not vengeance on these patriot murderers?
It has been borne too tamely. Fears and curses
Groan on our midnight beds, and e'en our dreams
Threaten the assassin hand of Robespierre.
He dies!—nor has the plot escaped his fears.

ADELAIDE.

Yet—yet—be cautious! much I fear the Commune—
The tyrant's creatures, and their fate with his
Fast link'd in close indissoluble union.
The Pale Convention—

TALLIEN.

Hate him as they fear him,
Impatient of the chain, resolved and ready.

ADELAIDE.

Th' enthusiast mob, confusion's lawless sons—

TALLIEN.

They are aweary of his stern morality,
The fair-mask'd offspring of ferocious pride.
The sections too support the delegates:
All—all is ours! e'en now the vital air
Of Liberty, condensed awhile, is bursting
(Force irresistible!) from its compressure—
To shatter the arch-chemist in the explosion!

Enter BILLAUD VARENNES *and* BOURDON L'OISE.

[ADELAIDE *retires.*

BOURDON L'OISE.

Tallien! was this a time for amorous conference?
Henriot, the tyrant's most devoted creature,
Marshals the force of Paris: The fierce club,
With Vivier at their head, in loud acclaim
Have sworn to make the guillotine in blood
Float on the scaffold.—But who comes here?

Enter BARRERE *abruptly.*

BARRERE.

Say, are ye friends to freedom? *I am her's!*
Let us, forgetful of all common feuds,
Rally around her shrine! E'en now the tyrant
Concerts a plan of instant massacre!

BILLAUD VARENNES.

Away to the Convention! with that voice
So oft the herald of glad victory,
Rouse their fallen spirits, thunder in their ears
The names of tyrant, plunderer, assassin!
The violent workings of my soul within
Anticipate the monster's blood!

[*Cry from the street of—«No Tyrant! Down with the Tyrant!»*

TALLIEN.

Hear ye that outcry?—If the trembling members
Even for a moment hold his fate suspended,
I swear, by the holy poniard that stabbed Cæsar,
This dagger probes his heart!

[*Exeunt omnes.*

ACT II.

SCENE.—*The Convention.*

ROBESPIERRE (*mounts the Tribune*).

Once more befits it that the voice of truth,
Fearless in innocence, though leaguer'd round
By envy and her hateful brood of hell,
Be heard amid this hall; once more befits
The patriot, whose prophetic eye so oft
Has pierced through faction's veil, to flash on crimes
Of deadliest import. Mouldering in the grave
Sleeps Capet's caitiff corse; my daring hand
Levell'd to earth his blood-cemented throne,
My voice declared his guilt, and stirr'd up France
To call for vengeance. I too dug the grave
Where sleep the Girondists, detested band!
Long with the show of freedom they abused
Her ardent sons. Long time the well-turn'd phrase,
The high fraught sentence, and the lofty tone
Of declamation, thunder'd in this hall,
Till reason 'midst a labyrinth of words
Perplex'd, in silence seem'd to yield assent.
I durst oppose. Soul of my honoured friend!
Spirit of Marat, upon thee I call—
Thou know'st me faithful, know'st with what warm zeal
I urged the cause of justice, stripp'd the mask
From faction's deadly visage, and destroy'd
Her traitor brood. Whose patriot arm hurl'd down
Hebert and Rousin, and the villain friends
Of Danton, foul apostate! those, who long
Mask'd treason's form in liberty's fair garb,

Long deluged France with blood, and durst defy
Omnipotence! but I, it seems, am false!
I am a traitor too! I—Robespierre!
I—at whose name the dastard despot brood
Look pale with fear, and call on saints to help them!
Who dares accuse me? who shall dare belie
My spotless name? Speak, ye accomplice band,
Of what am I accused? of what strange crime
Is Maximilian Robespierre accused,
That through this hall the buzz of discontent
Should murmur? who shall speak?

BILLAUD VARENNES.

O patriot tongue,
Belying the foul heart! Who was it urged,
Friendly to tyrants, that accurst decree
Whose influence brooding o'er this hallow'd hall,
Has chill'd each tongue to silence. Who destroy'd,
The freedom of debate, and carried through
The fatal law, that doom'd the delegates,
Unheard before their equals, to the bar
Where cruelty sat throned, and murder reign'd
With her Dumas co-equal? Say—thou man
Of mighty eloquence, whose law was that?

COUTHON.

That law was mine. I urged it—I proposed—
The voice of France assembled in her sons
Assented, though the tame and timid voice
Of traitors murmur'd. I advised that law—
I justify it. It was wise and good.

BARRERE.

Oh, wonderous wise, and most convenient too!
I have long mark'd thee, Robespierre—and now
Proclaim thee traitor—tyrant!

[*Loud applauses.*

ROBESPIERRE.

It is well.
I am a traitor! oh, that I had fallen
When Regnault lifted high the murderous knife;
Regnault, the instrument belike of those
Who now themselves would fain assassinate,
And legalize their murders. I stand here
An isolated patriot—hemmed around
By faction's noisy pack; beset and bay'd
By the foul hell-hounds who know no escape
From justice' outstretch'd arm, but by the force
That pierces through her breast.

[*Murmurs, and shouts of—Down with the tyrant!*

ROBESPIERRE.

Nay, but I will be heard. There was a time,
When Robespierre began, the loud applauses
Of honest patriots drown'd the honest sound.
But times are changed, and villany prevails.

COLLOT D'HERBOIS.

No—villany shall fall. France could not brook
A monarch's sway—sounds the dictator's name
More soothing to her ear?

BOURDON L'OISE.

Rattle her chains
More musically now than when the hand
Of Brissot forged her fetters, or the crew
Of Hebert thundered out their blasphemies,
And Danton talk'd of virtue?

ROBESPIERRE.

Oh, that Brissot
Were here again to thunder in this hall.
That Hebert lived, and Danton's giant form
Scowl'd once again defiance! so my soul
Might cope with worthy foes.
People of France,
Hear me! Beneath the vengeance of the law,
Traitors have perish'd countless; more survive:
The hydra-headed faction lifts anew
Her daring front, and fruitful from her wounds,
Cautious from past defects, contrives new wiles
Against the sons of Freedom.

TALLIEN.

Freedom lives!
Oppression falls—for France has felt her chains,
Has burst them too. Who traitor-like stept forth
Amid the hall of Jacobins to save
Camille Desmoulins, and the venal wretch
D'Eglantine?

ROBESPIERRE.

I did—for I thought them honest.
And Heaven forefend that vengeance ere should strike,
Ere justice doom'd the blow.

BARRERE.

Traitor, thou didst.
Yes, the accomplice of their dark designs,
Awhile didst thou defend them, when the storm
Lower'd at safe distance. When the clouds frown'd darker,
Fear'd for yourself and left them to their fate.
Oh, I have mark'd thee long, and through the veil
Seen thy foul projects. Yes, ambitious man,
Self-will'd dictator o'er the realm of France,
The vengeance thou hast plann'd for patriots,
Falls on thy head. Look how thy brother's deeds
Dishonour thine! He the firm patriot,
Thou the foul parricide of Liberty!

ROBESPIERRE JUNIOR.

Barrere—attempt not meanly to divide
Me from my brother. I partake his guilt,
For I partake his virtue.

ROBESPIERRE.

Brother, by my soul,
More dear I hold thee to my heart, that thus
With me thou darest to tread the dangerous path
Of virtue, than that nature twined her cords
Of kindred round us.

BARRERE.

Yes, allied in guilt,
Even as in blood ye are. Oh, thou worst wretch,
Thou worse than Sylla! hast thou not proscribed,
Yea, in most foul anticipation slaughter'd,
Each patriot representative of France?

BOURDON L'OISE.

Was not the younger Cæsar too to reign
O'er all our valiant armies in the south,
And still continue there his merchant wiles?

ROBESPIERRE JUNIOR.

His merchant wiles! Oh, grant me patience, Heaven!
Was it by merchant wiles I gain'd you back
Toulon, when proudly on her captive towers
Waved high the English flag? or fought I then
With merchant wiles, when sword in hand I led
Your troops to conquest? fought I merchant-like,
Or barter'd I for victory, when death
Strode o'er the reeking streets with giant stride,
And shook his ebon plumes, and sternly smiled
Amid the bloody banquet? when appall'd
The hireling sons of England spread the sail

Of safety, fought I like a merchant then?
Oh, patience! patience!

BOURDON L'OISE.

How this younger tyrant
Mouths out defiance to us! even so
He had led on the armies of the south,
Till once again the plains of France were drench'd
With her best blood.

COLLOT D'HERBOIS.

Till, once again display'd,
Lyons' sad tragedy had call'd me forth
The minister of wrath, whilst slaughter by
Had bathed in human blood.

DUBOIS CRANCÉ.

No wonder, friend,
That we are traitors—that our heads must fall
Beneath the axe of death! When Cæsar-like
Reigns Robespierre, 't is wisely done to doom
The fall of Brutus. Tell me, bloody man,
Hast thou not parcell'd out deluded France,
As it had been some province won in fight,
Between your curst triumvirate? You, Couthon,
Go with my brother to the southern plains;
St-Just, be yours the army of the north;
Meantime I rule at Paris.

ROBESPIERRE.

Matchless knave!
What—not one blush of conscience on thy cheek—
Not one poor blush of truth! Most likely tale!
That I who ruin'd Brissot's towering hopes,
I who discover'd Hebert's impious wiles,
And sharp'd for Danton's recreant neck the axe,
Should now be traitor! had I been so minded,
Think ye I had destroy'd the very men
Whose plots resembled mine? Bring forth your proofs
Of this deep treason. Tell me in whose breast
Found ye the fatal scroll? or tell me rather
Who forged the shameless falsehood?

COLLOT D'HERBOIS.

Ask you proofs?
Robespierre, what proofs were ask'd when Brissot died?

LEGENDRE.

What proofs adduced you when the Danton died?
When at the imminent peril of my life
I rose, and fearless of thy frowning brow,
Proclaim'd him guiltless?

ROBESPIERRE.

I remember well
The fatal day. I do repent me much
That I kill'd Cæsar and spared Antony.
But I have been too lenient. I have spared
The stream of blood, and now my own must flow
To fill the current.

[*Loud applauses.*

Triumph not too soon,
Justice may yet be victor.

Enter ST-JUST, *and mounts the Tribune.*

ST-JUST.

I come from the committee—charged to speak
Of matters of high import. I omit
Their orders. Representatives of France,
Boldly in his own person speaks St-Just
What his own heart shall dictate.

TALLIEN.

Hear ye this,
Insulted delegates of France? St Just
From your committee comes—comes charged to speak
Of matters of high import—yet omits
Their orders! Representatives of France,
That bold man I denounce, who disobeys
The nation's orders.—I denounce St-Just.

[*Loud applauses.*

ST. JUST.

Hear me! [*Violent murmurs.*

ROBESPIERRE.

He shall be heard!

BOURDON L'OISE.

Must we contaminate this sacred hall
With the foul breath of treason?

COLLOT D'HERBOIS.

Drag him away!
Hence with him to the bar.

COUTHON.

Oh, just proceedings!
Robespierre prevented liberty of speech—
And Robespierre is a tyrant! Tallien reigns,
He dreads to hear the voice of innocence—
And St-Just must be silent!

LEGENDRE.

Heed we well
That justice guide our actions. No light import
Attends this day. I move St-Just be heard.

FRÉRON.

Inviolate be the sacred right of man,
The freedom of debate.

[*Violent applauses.*

ST-JUST.

I may be heard, then! much the times are changed,
When St-Just thanks this hall for hearing him.
Robespierre is call'd a tyrant. Men of France,
Judge not too soon. By popular discontent
Was Aristides driven into exile,
Was Phocion murder'd? Ere ye dare pronounce
Robespierre is guilty, it befits ye well,
Consider who accuse him. Tallien,
Bourdon of Oise—the very men denounced,
For their dark intrigues disturb'd the plan
Of government. Legendre, the sworn friend
Of Danton, fall'n apostate. Dubois Crancé,
He who at Lyons spared the royalists—
Collot d'Herbois—

BOURDON L'OISE.

What—shall the traitor rear
His head amid our tribune—and blaspheme
Each patriot? shall the hireling slave of faction—

ST-JUST.

I am of no faction. I contend
Against all factions.

TALLIEN.

I espouse the cause
Of truth. Robespierre on yester morn pronounced
Upon his own authority a report.
To-day St-Just comes down. St-Just neglects
What the committee orders, and harangues
From his own will. O citizens of France,
I weep for you—I weep for my poor country—
I tremble for the cause of Liberty,
When individuals shall assume the sway,
And with more insolence than kingly pride
Rule the republic.

BILLAUD VARENNES.

Shudder, ye representatives of France,
Shudder with horror. Henriot commands
The marshall'd force of Paris—Henriot,
Foul parricide—the sworn ally of Hebert,
Denounced by all— upheld by Robespierre.
Who spared La Valette? who promoted him,
Stain'd with the deep dye of nobility?
Who to an ex-peer gave the high command?
Who screen'd from justice the rapacious thief?
Who cast in chains the friends of Liberty?
Robespierre, the self-styled patriot Robespierre—
Robespierre, allied with villain Daubigné—
Robespierre, the foul arch-tyrant Robespierre.

BOURDON L'OISE.

He talks of virtue—of morality—
Consistent patriot! he, Daubigné's friend!
Henriot's supporter virtuous! Preach of virtue,
Yet league with villains, for with Robespierre
Villains alone ally. Thou art a tyrant!
I style thee tyrant, Robespierre!

[*Loud applauses.*

ROBESPIERRE.

Take back the name. Ye citizens of France—

[*Violent clamour. Cries of—Down with the Tyrant!*

TALLIEN.

Oppression falls. The traitor stands appall'd—
Guilt's iron fangs engrasp his shrinking soul—
He hears assembled France denounce his crimes!
He sees the mask torn from his secret sins—
He trembles on the precipice of fate.
Fall'n guilty tyrant! murder'd by thy rage,
How many an innocent victim's blood has stain'd
Fair Freedom's altar! Sylla-like, thy hand
Mark'd down the virtues, that, thy foes removed,
Perpetual Dictator thou mightst reign,
And tyrannize o'er France, and call it freedom!
Long time in timid guilt the traitor plann'd
His fearful wiles—success embolden'd sin—
And his stretch'd arm had grasp'd the diadem
Ere now, but that the coward's heart recoil'd,
Lest France awaked, should rouse her from her dream,
And call aloud for vengeance. He, like Cæsar,
With rapid step urged on his bold career,
Even to the summit of ambitious power,
And deem'd the name of King alone was wanting.
Was it for this we hurl'd proud Capet down?
Is it for this we wage eternal war
Against the tyrant horde of murderers,
The crown'd cockatrices whose foul venom
Infects all Europe? was it then for this
We swore to guard our liberty with life,
That Robespierre should reign? the spirit of freedom
Is not yet sunk so low. The glowing flame
That animates each honest Frenchman's heart
Not yet extinguish'd. I invoke thy shade,
Immortal Brutus! I too wear a dagger;
And if the representatives of France,
Through fear or favour, should delay the sword
Of justice, Tallien emulates thy virtues;
Tallien, like Brutus, lifts the avenging arm;
Tallien shall save his country.

[*Violent applauses.*

BILLAUD VARENNES.

I demand
The arrest of all the traitors. Memorable
Will be this day for France.

ROBESPIERRE.

Yes! memorable
This day will be for France——for villains triumph.

LEBAS.

I will not share in this day's damning guilt.
Condemn me too.

[*Great cry—Down with the Tyrants!*
(*The two* ROBESPIERRES, COUTHON, ST-JUST *and* LEBAS *are led off.*)

ACT III.

SCENE *continues.*

COLLOT D'HERBOIS.

Cæsar is fallen! The baneful tree of Java,
Whose death-distilling boughs dropt poisonous dew,
Is rooted from its base. This worse than Cromwell,
The austere, the self-denying Robespierre,
Even in this hall, where once with terror mute
We listen'd to the hypocrite's harangues,
Has heard his doom.

BILLAUD VARENNES.

Yet must we not suppose
The tyrant will fall tamely. His sworn hireling
Henriot, the daring desperate Henriot
Commands the force of Paris. I denounce him.

FRÉRON.

I denounce Fleuriot too, the mayor of Paris.

Enter DUBOIS CRANCÉ.

DUBOIS CRANCÉ.

Robespierre is rescued. Henriot at the head
Of the armed force has rescued the fierce tyrant.

COLLOT D'HERBOIS.

Ring the tocsin—call all the citizens
To save their country—never yet has Paris
Forsook the representatives of France.

TALLIEN.

It is the hour of danger. I propose
This sitting be made permanent.

[*Loud applauses.*

COLLOT D'HERBOIS.

The national Convention shall remain
Firm at its post.

Enter a MESSENGER.

MESSENGER.

Robespierre has reach'd the Commune. They espouse
The tyrant's cause. St-Just is up in arms!
St-Just—the young ambitious bold St-Just
Harangues the mob. The sanguinary Couthon
Thirsts for your blood.

[*Tocsin rings.*

TALLIEN.

These tyrants are in arms against the law:
Outlaw the rebels.

Enter MERLIN OF DOUAY.

MERLIN.

Health to the representatives of France!
I past this moment through the armed force—
They ask'd my name—and when they heard a delegate,
Swore I was not the friend of France.

COLLOT D'HERBOIS.

The tyrants threaten us, as when they turn'd
The cannon's mouth on Brissot.

Enter another MESSENGER.

SECOND MESSENGER.

Vivier harangues the Jacobins—the club
Espouse the cause of Robespierre.

Enter another MESSENGER.

THIRD MESSENGER.

All 's lost—the tyrant triumphs. Henriot leads
The soldiers to his aid.——Already I hear
The rattling cannon destined to surround
This sacred hall.

TALLIEN.

Why, we will die like men then;
The representatives of France dare death,
When duty steels their bosoms.

[*Loud applauses.*

TALLIEN (*addressing the galleries*).

Citizens!
France is insulted in her delegates—
The majesty of the republic is insulted—
Tyrants are up in arms. An armed force
Threats the Convention. The Convention swears
To die, or save the country!

[*Violent applauses from the galleries.*

CITIZEN (*from above*).

We too swear
To die, or save the country. Follow me.

[*All the men quit the galleries.*

Enter another MESSENGER.

FOURTH MESSENGER.

Henriot is taken!—

[*Loud applauses.*

Henriot is taken. Three of your brave soldiers
Swore they would seize the rebel slave of tyrants,
Or perish in the attempt. As he patroll'd
The streets of Paris, stirring up the mob,
They seized him.

[*Applauses.*

BILLAUD VARENNES.

Let the names of these brave men
Live to the future day.

Enter BOURDON L'OISE *sword in hand.*

BOURDON L'OISE.

I have clear'd the Commune.

[*Applauses.*

Through the throng I rush'd,
Brandishing my good sword to drench its blade
Deep in the tyrant's heart. The timid rebels
Gave way. I met the soldiery—I spake
Of the dictator's crimes—of patriots chain'd
In dark deep dungeons by his lawless rage—
Of knaves secure beneath his fostering power.
I spake of Liberty. Their honest hearts
Caught the warm flame. The general shout burst forth,
« Live the Convention—Down with Robespierre!»

[*Applauses.*

[*Shouts from without—Down with the tyrant!*

TALLIEN.

I hear, I hear the soul-inspiring sounds,
France shall be saved! her generous sons, attached
To principles, not persons, spurn the idol
They worshipp'd once. Yes, Robespierre shall fall
As Capet fell! Oh! never let us deem
That France shall crouch beneath a tyrant's throne,
That the almighty people who have broke
On their oppressors' heads the oppressive chain,
Will court again their fetters! easier were it
To hurl the cloud-capt mountain from its base,
Than force the bonds of slavery upon men
Determined to be free!

[*Applauses.*

Enter LEGENDRE, *a pistol in one hand, keys in the other.*

LEGENDRE (*flinging down the keys*).

So—let the mutinous Jacobins meet now
In the open air.

[*Loud applauses.*

A factious turbulent party
Lording it o'er the state since Danton died,
And with him the Cordeliers.—A hireling band
Of loud-tongued orators controll'd the club,
And bade them bow the knee to Robespierre.
Vivier has 'scaped me. Curse his coward heart—
This fate-fraught tube of Justice in my hand,
I rush'd into the hall. He mark'd mine eye
That beam'd its patriot anger, and flash'd full
With death-denouncing meaning. 'Mid the throng
He mingled. I pursued—but staid my hand,
Lest haply I might shed the innocent blood.

[*Applauses.*

FRÉRON.

They took from me my ticket of admission—
Expell'd me from their sittings.—Now, forsooth,
Humbled and trembling re-insert my name;
But Fréron enters not the club again
Till it be purged of guilt—till, purified
Of tyrants and of traitors, honest men
May breathe the air in safety.

[*Shouts from without.*

BARRERE.

What means this uproar! if the tyrant band
Should gain the people once again to rise—
We are as dead!

TALLIEN.

And wherefore fear we death?
Did Brutus fear it? or the Grecian friends
Who buried in Hipparchus' breast the sword,
And died triumphant? Cæsar should fear death,
Brutus must scorn the bugbear.

[*Shouts from without. Live the Convention—Down with the Tyrants!*

TALLIEN.

Hark! again
The sounds of honest Freedom!

Enter DEPUTIES *from the* SECTIONS.

CITIZEN.

Citizens! representatives of France!
Hold on your steady course. The men of Paris
Espouse your cause. The men of Paris swear
They will defend the delegates of Freedom.

TALLIEN.

Hear ye this, Colleagues? hear ye this, my brethren?
And does no thrill of joy pervade your breasts?
My bosom bounds to rapture. I have seen

The sons of France shake off the tyrant yoke;
I have, as much as lies in mine own arm,
Hurl'd down the usurper.—Come death when it will,
I have lived long enough.

[*Shouts without.*

BARRERE.

Hark! how the noise increases! through the gloom
Of the still evening—harbinger of death,
Rings the tocsin! the dreadful generale
Thunders through Paris—

[*Cry without—Down with the Tyrant!*

Enter LECOINTRE.

LECOINTRE.

So may eternal justice blast the foes
Of France! so perish all the tyrant brood,
As Robespierre has perished! Citizens,
Cæsar is taken.

[*Loud and repeated applauses.*

I marvel not, that with such fearless front,
He braved our vengeance, and with angry eye
Scowl'd round the hall defiance. He relied
On Henriot's aid—the Commune's villain friendship,
And Henriot's *boughten* succours. Ye have heard
How Henriot rescued him—how with open arms
The Commune welcomed in the rebel tyrant—
How Fleuriot aided, and seditious Vivier
Stirr'd up the Jacobins. All had been lost—
The representatives of France had perish'd—
Freedom had sunk beneath the tyrant arm
Of this foul parricide, but that her spirit
Inspired the men of Paris. Henriot call'd
« To arms» in vain, whilst Bourdon's patriot voice
Breathed eloquence, and o'er the Jacobins
Legendre frown'd dismay. The tyrants fled—
They reach'd the Hotel. We gather'd round—we call'd
For vengeance! Long time, obstinate in despair,
With knives they hack'd around them. Till foreboding
The sentence of the law, the clamorous cry
Of joyful thousands hailing their destruction,
Each sought by suicide to escape the dread
Of death. Lebas succeeded. From the window
Leapt the younger Robespierre, but his fractured limb
Forbade to escape. The self-will'd dictator
Plunged often the keen knife in his dark breast,
Yet impotent to die. He lives all mangled
By his own tremulous hand! All gash'd and gored,
He lives to taste the bitterness of death.
Even now they meet their doom. The bloody Couthon,
The fierce St-Just, even now attend their tyrant
To fall beneath the axe. I saw the torches
Flash on their visages a dreadful light—
I saw them whilst the black blood roll'd adown
Each stern face, even then with dauntless eye
Scowl round contemptuous, dying as they lived,
Fearless of fate!

[*Loud and repeated applauses.*

BARRERE (*mounts the Tribune*).

For ever hallow'd be this glorious day,
When Freedom, bursting her oppressive chain,
Tramples on the oppressor. When the tyrant,
Hurl'd from his blood-cemented throne by the arm
Of the almighty people, meets the death
He plann'd for thousands. Oh! my sickening heart
Has sunk within me, when the various woes
Of my brave country crowded o'er my brain
In ghastly numbers—when assembled hordes,
Dragg'd from their hovels by despotic power,
Rush'd o'er her frontiers, plunder'd her fair hamlets,
And sack'd her populous towns, and drench'd with blood
The reeking fields of Flanders.—When within,
Upon her vitals prey'd the rankling tooth
Of treason; and oppression, giant form,
Trampling on freedom, left the alternative
Of slavery, or of death. Even from that day,
When, on the guilty Capet, I pronounced
The doom of injured France, has faction rear'd
Her hated head amongst us. Roland preach'd
Of mercy—the uxorious dotard Roland,
The woman-govern'd Roland durst aspire
To govern France; and Petion talk'd of virtue,
And Vergniaud's eloquence, like the honey'd tongue
Of some soft Syren, wooed us to destruction.
We triumph'd over these. On the same scaffold
Where the last Louis pour'd his guilty blood,
Fell Brissot's head, the womb of darksome treasons,
And Orleans, villain kinsman of the Capet,
And Hebert's atheist crew, whose maddening hand
Hurl'd down the altars of the living God,
With all the infidel's intolerance.
The last worst traitor triumphed—triumph'd long,
Secured by matchless villany. By turns
Defending and deserting each accomplice
As interest prompted. In the goodly soil
Of Freedom, the foul tree of treason struck
Its deep-fix'd roots, and dropt the dews of death
On all who slumber'd in its specious shade.
He wove the web of treachery. He caught
The listening crowd by his wild eloquence,
His cool ferocity, that persuaded murder,
Even whilst it spake of mercy!—Never, never
Shall this regenerated country wear
The despot yoke. Though myriads round assail,
And with worse fury urge this new crusade
Than savages have known; though the leagued despots
Depopulate all Europe, so to pour
The accumulated mass upon our coasts,
Sublime amid the storm shall France arise,
And like the rock amid surrounding waves
Repel the rushing ocean.—She shall wield
The thunder-bolt of vengeance—she shall blast
The despot's pride, and liberate the world!

Miscellaneous Poems.

PROSE IN RHYME: OR EPIGRAMS, MORALITIES, AND THINGS WITHOUT A NAME.

Ἔρως ἀεὶ λάληθρος ἑταῖρος.

In many ways does the full heart reveal
The presence of the love it would conceal;
But in far more th' estranged heart lets know
The absence of the love, which yet it fain would show.

LOVE.[1]

All thoughts, all passions, all delights,
Whatever stirs this mortal frame,
All are but ministers of Love,
And feed his sacred flame.

Oft in my waking dreams do I
Live o'er again that happy hour,
When midway on the mount I lay,
Beside the ruin'd tower.

The Moonshine, stealing o'er the scene,
Had blended with the lights of eve;
And she was there, my hope, my joy,
My own dear Genevieve!

She leant against the armed man,
The statue of the armed knight;
She stood and listen'd to my lay,
Amid the lingering light.

Few sorrows hath she of her own,
My hope! my joy! my Genevieve!
She loves me best, whene'er I sing
The songs that make her grieve.

I play'd a soft and doleful air,
I sang an old and moving story—
An old rude song, that suited well
That ruin wild and hoary.

She listen'd with a flitting blush,
With downcast eyes and modest grace;
For well she knew, I could not chuse
But gaze upon her face.

I told her of the Knight that wore
Upon his shield a burning brand;
And that for ten long years he wooed
The Lady of the Land.

I told her how he pined: and ah!
The deep, the low, the pleading tone
With which I sang another's love,
Interpreted my own.

She listen'd with a flitting blush,
With downcast eyes, and modest grace;
And she forgave me, that I gazed
Too fondly on her face!

But when I told the cruel scorn
That crazed that bold and lovely Knight,
And that he cross'd the mountain-woods,
Nor rested day nor night;

That sometimes from the savage den,
And sometimes from the darksome shade,
And sometimes starting up at once
In green and sunny glade,

There came and looked him in the face
An angel beautiful and bright;
And that he knew it was a Fiend,
This miserable Knight!

And that unknowing what he did,
He leaped amid a murderous band,
And saved from outrage worse than death
The Lady of the Land!

And how she wept, and clasp'd his knees;
And how she tended him in vain—
And ever strove to expiate
The scorn that crazed his brain.

And that she nursed him in a cave;
And how his madness went away,
When on the yellow forest-leaves
A dying man he lay.

His dying words—but when I reach'd
That tenderest strain of all the ditty,
My faltering voice and pausing harp
Disturb'd her soul with pity!

All impulses of soul and sense
Had thrill'd my guileless Genevieve;
The music and the doleful tale,
The rich and balmy eve;

And hopes, and fears that kindle hope,
An undistinguishable throng,
And gentle wishes long subdued,
Subdued and cherish'd long!

[1] This piece may be found as originally published, under another title, at page 28.

She wept with pity and delight,
She blush'd with love, and virgin-shame;
And like the murmur of a dream,
I heard her breathe my name.

Her bosom heaved—she stepp'd aside,
As conscious of my look she stepp'd—
Then suddenly, with timorous eye
She fled to me and wept.

She half enclosed me with her arms,
She press'd me with a meek embrace;
And bending back her head, looked up,
And gazed upon my face.

'T was partly Love, and partly Fear,
And partly 't was a bashful art,
That I might rather feel, than see,
The swelling of her heart.

I calm'd her fears, and she was calm,
And told her love with virgin pride;
And so I won my Genevieve,
My bright and beauteous Bride.

DUTY SURVIVING SELF-LOVE,

THE ONLY SURE FRIEND OF DECLINING LIFE.

A SOLILOQUY.

Unchanged within to see all changed without,
Is a blank lot and hard to bear, no doubt.
Yet why at others' wanings shouldst thou fret?
Then only mightst thou feel a just regret,
Hadst thou withheld thy love or hid thy light
In selfish forethought of neglect and slight.
O wiselier then, from feeble yearnings freed,
While, and *on whom,* thou mayst—shine on! nor heed
Whether the object by reflected light
Return thy radiance or absorb it quite:
And though thou notest from thy safe recess
Old Friends burn dim, like lamps in noisome air,
Love them for what they *are:* nor love them less,
Because to *thee* they are not what they *were.*

PHANTOM OR FACT?

A DIALOGUE IN VERSE.

AUTHOR.

A lovely form there sate beside my bed,
And such a feeding calm its presence shed,
A tender love so pure from earthly leaven
That I unnethe the fancy might control,
'T was my own spirit newly come from heaven
Wooing its gentle way into my soul!
But ah! the change—It had not stirr'd, and yet—
Alas! that change how fain would I forget?
That shrinking back, like one that had mistook!
That weary, wandering, disavowing Look!
'T was all another, feature, look, and frame,
And still, methought, I knew it was the same!

FRIEND.

This riddling tale, to what does it belong?
Is 't history? vision? or an idle song?
Or rather say at once, within what space
Of time this wild disastrous change took place?

AUTHOR.

Call it a *moment's* work (and such it seems),
This tale 's a fragment from the life of dreams;
But say, that years matured the silent strife,
And 't is a record from the dream of life.

WORK WITHOUT HOPE.

LINES COMPOSED 21ST FEBRUARY, 1827.

All Nature seems at work. Stags leave their lair—
The bees are stirring—birds are on the wing—
And Winter, slumbering in the open air,
Wears on his smiling face a dream of Spring!
And I, the while, the sole unbusy thing,
Nor honey make, nor pair, nor build, nor sing.

Yet well I ken the banks where amaranths blow,
Have traced the fount whence streams of nectar flow.
Bloom, O ye amaranths! bloom for whom ye may,
For me ye bloom not! Glide, rich streams, away!
With lips unbrighten'd, wreathless brow, I stroll:
And would you learn the spells that drowse my soul?
Work without hope draws nectar in a sieve,
And hope without an object cannot live.

YOUTH AND AGE.

Verse, a breeze 'mid blossoms straying,
Where Hope clung feeding, like a bee—
Both were mine! Life went a maying
With Nature, Hope, and Poesy,
When I was young!
When I was young?—Ah, woful *when!*
Ah for the change 'twixt now and then!
This breathing house not built with hands,
This body that does me grievous wrong,
O'er aery cliffs and glittering sands,
How lightly *then* it flash'd along:—
Like those trim skiffs, unknown of yore,
On winding lakes and rivers wide,
That ask no aid of sail or oar,
That fear no spite of wind or tide!
Nought cared this body for wind or weather,
When Youth and I lived in 't together.

Flowers are lovely; Love is flower-like;
Friendship is a sheltering tree;
O the joys, that came down shower-like,
Of Friendship, Love, and Liberty,
Ere I was old!
Ere I was old? Ah woful *Ere,*
Which tells me, Youth 's no longer here!
O Youth! for years so many and sweet,
'T is known, that thou and I were one,
I 'll think it but a fond conceit—
It cannot be, that thou art gone!
Thy vesper-bell hath not yet toll'd:—
And thou wert aye a masker bold!
What strange disguise hast now put on,
To *make believe* that thou art gone?
I see these locks in silvery slips,
This drooping gait, this alter'd size:

But springtide blossoms on thy lips,
And tears take sunshine from thine eyes!
Life is but thought: so think I will
That youth and I are house-mates still.

A DAY DREAM.

My eyes make pictures, when they are shut:—
I see a fountain, large and fair,
A willow and a ruin'd hut,
And thee, and me, and Mary there.
O Mary! make thy gentle lap our pillow!
Bend o'er us, like a bower, my beautiful green willow!

A wild-rose roofs the ruin'd shed,
And that and summer well agree:
And lo! where Mary leans her head,
Two dear names carved upon the tree!
And Mary's tears, they are not tears of sorrow:
Our sister and our friend will both be here to-morrow.

'T was day! But now few, large, and bright,
The stars are round the crescent moon!
And now it is a dark warm night,
The balmiest of the month of June!
A glow-worm fallen, and on the marge remounting
Shines, and its shadow shines, fit stars for our sweet fountain.

O ever—ever be thou blest!
For dearly, Asra! love I thee!
This brooding warmth across my breast,
This depth of tranquil bliss—ah me!
Fount, tree and shed are gone, I know not whither,
But in one quiet room we three are still together.

The shadows dance upon the wall,
By the still dancing fire-flames made;
And now they slumber, moveless all!
And now they melt to one deep shade!
But not from me shall this mild darkness steal thee:
I dream thee with mine eyes, and at my heart I feel thee!

Thine eyelash on my cheek doth play—
'T is Mary's hand upon my brow!
But let me check this tender lay,
Which none may hear but she and thou!
Like the still hive at quiet midnight humming,
Murmur it to yourselves, ye two beloved women!

TO A LADY,

OFFENDED BY A SPORTIVE OBSERVATION THAT WOMEN HAVE NO SOULS.

Nay, dearest Anna! why so grave?
I said, you had no soul, 't is true!
For what you *are* you cannot *have*:
'T is I, that *have* one since I first had *you!*

I have heard of reasons manifold
Why Love must needs be blind,
But this the best of all I hold—
His eyes are in his mind.
What outward form and feature are
He guesseth but in part;
But what within is good and fair
He seeth with the heart.

LINES SUGGESTED BY THE LAST WORDS OF BERENGARIUS.

OB. ANNO DOM. 1088.

No more 'twixt conscience staggering and the Pope,
Soon shall I now before my God appear,
By him to be acquitted, as I hope;
By him to be condemned, as I fear.—

REFLECTION ON THE ABOVE.

Lynx amid moles! had I stood by thy bed,
Be of good cheer, meek soul! I would have said:
I see a hope spring from that humble fear.
All are not strong alike through storms to steer
Right onward. What though dread of threaten'd death
And dungeon torture made thy hand and breath
Inconstant to the truth within thy heart?
That truth, from which, through fear, thou twice didst start,
Fear haply told thee, was a learned strife,
Or not so vital as to claim thy life:
And myriads had reach'd Heaven, who never knew
Where lay the difference 'twixt the false and true!

Ye, who secure 'mid trophies not your own,
Judge him who won them when he stood alone,
And proudly talk of *recreant* BERENGARE—
O first the age, and then the man compare!
That age how dark! congenial minds how rare!
No host of friends with kindred zeal did burn!
No throbbing hearts awaited his return!
Prostrate alike when prince and peasant fell,
He only disenchanted from the spell,
Like the weak worm that gems the starless night,
Moved in the scanty circlet of his light:
And was it strange if he withdrew the ray
That did but guide the night-birds to their prey?

The ascending Day-star with a bolder eye
Hath lit each dew-drop on our trimmer lawn!
Yet not for this, if wise, will we decry
The spots and struggles of the timid DAWN!
Lest so we tempt th' approaching NOON to scorn
The mists and painted vapours of our MORN.

THE DEVIL'S THOUGHTS.

From his brimstone bed at break of day
A walking the DEVIL is gone,
To visit his little snug farm of the earth,
And see how his stock went on.

Over the hill and over the dale,
And he went over the plain,
And backwards and forwards he swish'd his long tail
As a gentleman swishes his cane.

And how then was the Devil drest?
Oh! he was in his Sunday's best:
His jacket was red and his breeches were blue,
And there was a hole where the tail came through.

He saw a LAWYER killing a Viper
On a dung-heap beside his stable,
And the Devil smiled, for it put him in mind
Of Cain and *his* brother, Abel.

A POTHECARY on a white horse
Rode by on his vocations,
And the Devil thought of his old Friend
DEATH in the Revelations.

He saw a cottage with a double coach-house,
A cottage of gentility!
And the Devil did grin, for his darling sin
Is pride that apes humility.

He went into a rich bookseller's shop,
Quoth he! we are both of one college;
For I myself sate like a cormorant once
Fast by the tree of knowledge.[1]

Down the river there plied with wind and tide,
A pig, with vast celerity;
And the Devil look'd wise as he saw how the while,
It cut its own throat. There! quoth he, with a smile,
Goes «England's commercial prosperity.»

As he went through Cold-Bath Fields he saw
A solitary cell,
And the Devil was pleased, for it gave him a hint
For improving his prisons in Hell.

* * * * * * *

General ——— burning face
He saw with consternation,
And back to hell his way did he take,
For the Devil thought, by a slight mistake,
It was general conflagration.

[1] And all amid them stood the TREE OF LIFE
High eminent, blooming ambrosial fruit
Of vegetable gold (query *paper money?*); and next to Life
Our Death, the TREE OF KNOWLEDGE, grew fast by.—
* * * * * *
* * * * * *

So clomb this first grand thief——
Thence up he flew, and on the tree of life
Sat like a cormorant.—PAR. LOST, IV.

The allegory here is so apt, that in a catalogue of *various readings* obtained from collating the MSS. one might expect to find it noted, that for «LIFE» *Cod. quid habent,* «TRADE.» Though indeed THE TRADE, i. e. the bibliopolic, so called κάτ' ἐξόχην, may be regarded as LIFE sensu *eminentiori;* a suggestion, which I owe to a young retailer in the hosiery line, who on hearing a description of the net profits, dinner parties, country houses, etc. of the trade, exclaimed, «Ay! that 's what I call LIFE now!»—This «Life, *our* Death,» is thus happily contrasted with the fruits of Authorship.—Sic nos non nobis mellificamus Apes.

Of this poem, with which the Fire, Famine and Slaughter first appeared in the Morning Post, the three first stanzas, which are worth all the rest, and the ninth, were dictated by Mr Southey. Between the ninth and the concluding stanza, two or three are omitted as grounded on subjects that have lost their interest—and for better reasons.

If any one should ask, who General —— meant, the Author begs leave to inform him, that he did once see a red-faced person in a dream whom by the dress he took for a General; but he might have been mistaken, and most certainly he did not hear any names mentioned. In simple verity, the Author never meant any one, or indeed any thing but to put a concluding stanza to his doggerel.

CONSTANCY TO AN IDEAL OBJECT.

SINCE all, that beat about in Nature's range,
Or veer or vanish, why shouldst thou remain
The only constant in a world of change—
O yearning THOUGHT, that livest but in the brain?
Call to the HOURS, that in the distance play,
The faery people of the future day——
Fond THOUGHT! not one of all that shining swarm
Will breathe on *thee* with life-enkindling breath,
Till when, like strangers shelt'ring from a storm,
Hope and Despair meet in the porch of Death!
Yet still thou haunt'st me; and though well I see,
She is not thou, and only thou art she,
Still, still as though some dear *embodied* good,
Some *living* love before my eyes there stood,
With answering look a ready ear to lend,
I mourn to thee and say—«Ah! loveliest friend!
That this the meed of all my toils might be,
To have a home, an English home and thee!
Vain repetition! Home and thou are one.
The peacefull'st cot the moon shall shine upon,
Lull'd by the thrush and waken'd by the lark,
Without thee were but a becalmed Bark,
Whose helmsman on an ocean waste and wide
Sits mute and pale his mouldering helm beside.

And art thou nothing? Such thou art, as when
The woodman winding westward up the glen
At wintry dawn, where o'er the sheep-track's maze
The viewless snow-mist weaves a glist'ning haze,
Sees full before him, gliding without tread,
An image[1] with a glory round its head;
The enamour'd rustic worships its fair hues,
Nor knows, he *makes* the shadow he pursues!

THE SUICIDE'S ARGUMENT.

ERE the birth of my life, if I wish'd it or no
No question was ask'd me—it could not be so!
If the life was the question, a thing sent to try,
And to live on be YES; what can No be? to die.

NATURE'S ANSWER.

Is 't return'd as 't was sent? Is 't no worse for the wear?
Think first, what you ARE! Call to mind what you WERE!
I gave you innocence, I gave you hope,
Gave health, and genius, and an ample scope.
Return you me guilt, lethargy, despair?
Make out the Invent'ry; inspect, compare!
Then die—if die you dare!

[1] This phenomenon, which the Author has himself experienced, and of which the reader may find a description in one of the earlier volumes of the Manchester Philosophical Transactions, is applied figuratively in the following passage of the *Aids to Reflection:*

«Pindar's fine remark respecting the different effects of music, on different characters, holds equally true of Genius: as many as are not delighted by it are disturbed, perplexed, irritated. The beholder either recognizes it *as a projected form of his own Being, that moves before him with a Glory round its head,* or recoils from it as a spectre.»—*Aids to Reflection*, p. 220.

THE BLOSSOMING OF THE SOLITARY DATE-TREE.

A LAMENT.

I seem to have an indistinct recollection of having read either in one of the ponderous tomes of George of Venice, or in some other compilation from the uninspired Hebrew Writers, an Apologue or Rabbinical Tradition to the following purpose:

While our first parents stood before their offended Maker, and the last words of the sentence were yet sounding in Adam's ear, the guileful false serpent, a counterfeit and a usurper from the beginning, presumptuously took on himself the character of advocate or mediator, and pretending to intercede for Adam, exclaimed: «Nay, Lord, in thy justice, not so! for the Man was the least in fault. Rather let the Woman return at once to the dust, and let Adam remain in this thy Paradise.» And the word of the Most High answered Satan: «*The tender mercies of the wicked are cruel.* Treacherous Friend! if with guilt like thine, it had been possible for thee to have the heart of a Man, and to feel the yearning of a human soul for its counterpart, the sentence, which thou now counsellest, should have been inflicted on thyself.»

[The title of the following poem was suggested by a fact mentioned by Linnæus, of a Date-tree in a nobleman's garden, which year after year had put forth a full show of blossoms, but never produced fruit, till a branch from a Date-tree had been conveyed from a distance of some hundred leagues. The first leaf of the MS. from which the poem has been transcribed, and which contained the two or three introductory stanzas, is wanting: and the author has in vain taxed his memory to repair the loss. But a rude draught of the poem contains the substance of the stanzas, and the reader is requested to receive it as the substitute. It is not impossible, that some congenial spirit, whose years do not exceed those of the author, at the time the poem was written, may find a pleasure in restoring the Lament to its original integrity by a reduction of the thoughts to the requisite Metre.—S. T. C.

1.

Beneath the blaze of a tropical sun the mountain peaks are the Thrones of Frost, through the absence of objects to reflect the rays. «What no one with us shares, seems scarce our own.» The presence of a one,

The best beloved, who loveth me the best,

is for the heart, what the supporting air from within is for the hollow globe with its suspended car. Deprive it of this, and all without, that would have buoyed it aloft even to the seat of the gods, becomes a burthen, and crushes it into flatness.

2.

The finer the sense for the beautiful and the lovely, and the fairer and lovelier the object presented to the sense; the more exquisite the individual's capacity of joy, and the more ample his means and opportunities of enjoyment, the more heavily will he feel the ache of solitariness, the more unsubstantial becomes the feast spread around him. What matters it, whether in fact the viands and the ministering graces are shadowy or real, to him who has not hand to grasp nor arms to embrace them?

3.

Imagination; honourable Aims;
Free Commune with the choir that cannot die;
Science and Song; Delight in little things,
The buoyant child surviving in the man;
Fields, forests, ancient mountains, ocean, sky,
With all their voices—O dare I accuse
My earthly lot as guilty of my spleen,
Or call my destiny niggard! O no! no!
It is her largeness, and her overflow,
Which being incomplete, disquieteth me so!

4.

For never touch of gladness stirs my heart,
But tim'rously beginning to rejoice
Like a blind Arab, that from sleep doth start
In lonesome tent, I listen for *thy* voice.
Beloved! 't is not thine; thou art not there!
Then melts the bubble into idle air,
And wishing without hope I restlessly despair.

5.

The mother with anticipated glee
Smiles o'er the child, that standing by her chair,
And flatt'ning its round cheek upon her knee,
Looks up, and doth its rosy lips prepare
To mock the coming sounds. At that sweet sight
She hears her own voice with a new delight;
And if the babe perchance should lisp the notes aright,

6.

Then is she tenfold gladder than before!
But should disease or chance the darling take,
What then avail those songs, which sweet of yore
Were only sweet for their sweet echo's sake?
Dear maid! no prattler at a mother's knee
Was e'er so dearly prized as I prize *thee:*
Why was I made for love, and love denied to me?

FANCY IN NUBIBUS,

OR THE POET IN THE CLOUDS.

O! it is pleasant, with a heart at ease,
Just after sunset, or by moonlight skies,
To make the shifting clouds be what you please,
Or let the easily persuaded eyes
Own each quaint likeness issuing from the mould
Of a friend's fancy; or with head bent low
And cheek aslant, see rivers flow of gold
'Twixt crimson banks; and then, a traveller, go
From mount to mount through Cloudland, gorgeous land!
Or list'ning to the tide, with closed sight,
Be that blind bard, who on the Chian strand
By those deep sounds possess'd, with inward light
Beheld the Iliad and the Odyssey
Rise to the swelling of the voiceful sea.

THE TWO FOUNTS.

STANZAS ADDRESSED TO A LADY ON HER RECOVERY WITH UNBLEMISHED LOOKS, FROM A SEVERE ATTACK OF PAIN.

'T was my last waking thought, how it could be,
That thou, sweet friend, such anguish shouldst endure:
When straight from Dreamland came a Dwarf, and he
Could tell the cause, forsooth, and knew the cure.

Methought he fronted me, with peering look
Fix'd on my heart; and read aloud in game
The loves and griefs therein, as from a book:
And utter'd praise like one who wish'd to blame.

In every heart (quoth he) since Adam's sin,
Two Founts there are, of suffering and of cheer!
That to let forth, and *this* to keep within!
But she, whose aspect I find imaged here,

Of Pleasure only will to all dispense,
That Fount alone unlock, by no distress
Choked or turned inward, but still issue thence
Unconquer'd cheer, persistent loveliness.

As on the driving cloud the shiny Bow,
That gracious thing made up of tears and light,
Mid the wild rack and rain that slants below
Stands smiling forth, unmoved and freshly bright:

As though the spirits of all lovely flowers,
Inweaving each its wreath and dewy crown,
Or ere they sank to earth in vernal showers,
Had built a bridge to tempt the angels down.

Even so, Eliza! on that face of thine,
On that benignant face, whose look alone
(The soul's translucence through her crystal shrine!)
Has power to soothe all anguish but thine own.

A beauty hovers still, and ne'er takes wing,
But with a silent charm compels the stern
And tort'ring Genius of the bitter spring
To shrink aback, and cower upon his urn.

Who then needs wonder, if (no outlet found
In passion, spleen, or strife) the FOUNT OF PAIN
O'erflowing beats against its lovely mound,
And in wild flashes shoots from heart to brain?

Sleep, and the Dwarf with that unsteady gleam
On his raised lip, that aped a critic smile,
Had pass'd: yet I, my sad thoughts to beguile,
Lay weaving on the tissue of my dream:

Till audibly at length I cried, as though
Thou hadst indeed been present to my eyes,
O sweet, sweet sufferer! if the case be so,
I pray thee, be *less* good, *less* sweet, *less* wise!

In every look a barbed arrow send,
On those soft lips let scorn and anger live!
Do *any* thing, rather than thus, sweet friend!
Hoard for thyself the pain thou wilt not give!

WHAT IS LIFE?

RESEMBLES life what once was held of light,
Too ample in itself for human sight?
An absolute self? an element ungrounded?
All that we see, all colours of all shade
By encroach of darkness made?
Is *very* life by consciousness unbounded?
And all the thoughts, pains, joys of mortal breath,
A war-embrace of wrestling life and death?

THE EXCHANGE.

WE pledged our hearts, my love and I,—
I in my arms the maiden clasping;
I could not tell the reason why,
But, oh! I trembled like an aspen.

Her father's love she bade me gain;
I went and shook like any reed!
I strove to act the man—in vain!
We had exchanged our hearts indeed.

SONNET,

COMPOSED BY THE SEASIDE, OCTOBER 1817.

OH! it is pleasant, with a heart at ease,
Just after sunset, or by moonlight skies,
To make the shifting clouds be what you please;
Or yield the easily persuaded eyes

To each quaint image issuing from the mould
Of a friend's fancy; or with head bent low,
And cheek aslant, see rivers flow of gold
'Twixt crimson banks; and then, a traveller, go

From mount to mount, through Cloudland, gorgeous land!
Or listening to the tide, with closed sight,
Be that blind bard, who on the Chian strand,
By those deep sounds possess'd, with inward light
Beheld the Iliad and the Odyssey
Rise to the swelling of the voiceful sea!

EPIGRAMS.

I.

I ASK'D my fair, one happy day,
What I should call her in my lay,
By what sweet name from Rome, or Greece,
Neæra, Laura, Daphne, Chloris,
Carina, Lalage, or Doris,
Dorimene, or Lucrece?

II.

« Ah,» replied my gentle fair;
« Dear one, what are names but air?—
Chuse thou whatever suits the line;
Call me Laura, call me Chloris,
Call me Lalage, or Doris,
Only—only—call me *thine*?»

SLY Belzebub took all occasions
To try Job's constancy, and patience.
He took his honour, took his health;
He took his children, took his wealth,
His servants, oxen, horses, cows,—
But cunning Satan did *not* take his spouse.

But heaven, that brings out good from evil,
And loves to disappoint the devil,
Had predetermined to restore
Twofold all he had before;
His servants, horses, oxen, cows—
Short-sighted devil, *not* to take his spouse!

HOARSE Mævius reads his hobbling verse
To all, and at all times;
And finds them both divinely smooth,
His voice as well as rhymes.

But folks say Mævius is no ass;
But Mævius makes it clear
That he 's a monster of an ass—
An ass without an ear!

There comes from old Avaro's grave
A deadly stench—why, sure, they have
Immured his *soul* within his Grave?

Last Monday all the papers said,
That Mr ——— was dead;
Why, then, what said the city?
The tenth part sadly shook their head,
And shaking sigh'd, and sighing said,
« Pity, indeed, 't is pity! »

But when the said report was found
A rumour wholly without ground,
Why, then, what said the city?
The other *nine* parts shook their head,
Repeating what the tenth had said,
« Pity, indeed, 't is pity! »

Your poem must *eternal* be,
Dear Sir!—it cannot fail—
For 't is incomprehensible,
And wants both *head* and *tail*.

Swans sing before they die—'t were no bad thing
Did certain persons die before they sing.

THE WANDERINGS OF CAIN.

PREFATORY NOTE.

A prose composition, one not in metre at least, seems *prima facie* to require explanation or apology. It was written in the year 1798, near Nether Stowey in Somersetshire, at which place (*sanctum et amabile nomen!* rich by so many associations and recollections) the Author had taken up his residence in order to enjoy the society and close neighbourhood of a dear and honoured friend, T. Poole, Esq. The work was to have been written in concert with another, whose name is too venerable within the precincts of genius to be unnecessarily brought into connection with such a trifle, and who was then residing at a small distance from Nether Stowey. The title and subject were suggested by myself, who likewise drew out the scheme and the contents for each of the three books or cantos, of which the work was to consist, and which, the reader is to be informed, was to have been finished in one night! My partner undertook the first canto: I the second: and whichever had *done first*, was to set about the third. Almost thirty years have passed by; yet at this moment I cannot without something more than a smile moot the question which of the two things was the more impracticable, for a mind so eminently original to compose another man's thoughts and fancies, or for a taste so austerely pure and simple to imitate the Death of Abel? Methinks I see his grand and noble countenance as at the moment when having dispatched my own portion of the task at full finger-speed, I hastened to him with my manuscript—that look of humorous despondency fixed on his almost blank sheet of paper, and then its silent mock-piteous admission of failure struggling with the sense of the exceeding ridiculousness of the whole scheme—which broke up in a laugh: and the Ancient Mariner was written instead.

Years afterward, however, the draft of the Plan and proposed Incidents, and the portion executed, obtained favour in the eyes of more than one person, whose judgment on a poetic work could not but have weighed with me, even though no parental partiality had been thrown into the same scale, as a make-weight: and I determined on commencing anew, and composing the whole in stanzas, and made some progress in realizing this intention, when adverse gales drove my bark off the « Fortunate Isles » of the Muses: and then other and more momentous interests prompted a different voyage, to firmer anchorage and a securer port. I have in vain tried to recover the lines from the Palimpsest tablet of my memory: and I can only offer the introductory stanza, which had been committed to writing for the purpose of procuring a friend's judgment on the metre, as a specimen.

Encinctured with a twine of leaves,
That leafy twine his only dress!
A lovely Boy was plucking fruits,
By moonlight, in a wilderness.
The morn was bright, the air was free,
And fruits and flowers together grew
On many a shrub and many a tree:
And all put on a gentle hue,
Hanging in the shadowy air
Like a picture rich and rare.
It was a climate where, they say,
The night is more beloved than day.
But who that beauteous Boy beguiled,
That beauteous Boy, to linger here?
Alone, by night, a little child,
In place so silent and so wild—
Has he no friend, no loving Mother near?

I have here given the birth, parentage, and premature decease of the « Wanderings of Cain, a poem, »—intreating, however, my Readers not to think so meanly of my judgment, as to suppose that I either regard or offer it as any excuse for the publication of the following fragment (and, I may add, of one or two others in its neighbourhood), in its primitive crudity. But I should find still greater difficulty in forgiving myself, were I to record pro *tædio* publico a set of petty mishaps and annoyances which I myself wish to forget. I must be content therefore with assuring the friendly Reader, that the less he attributes its appearance to the Author's will, choice, or judgment, the nearer to the truth he will be.

S. T. C.

CANTO II.

« A little further, O my father, yet a little further, and we shall come into the open moonlight. » Their road was through a forest of fir-trees; at its entrance the trees stood at distances from each other, and the path was broad, and the moonlight, and the moonlight shadows reposed upon it, and appeared quietly to inhabit that solitude. But soon the path winded and became narrow; the sun at high noon sometimes speckled, but never illumined it, and now it was dark as a cavern.

« It is dark, O my father! » said Enos; « but the path under our feet is smooth and soft, and we shall soon come out into the open moonlight. »

« Lead on, my child! » said Cain: « guide me, little child! » And the innocent little child clasped a finger of the hand which had murdered the righteous Abel, and he guided his father. « The fir branches drip upon thee, my son. » « Yea, pleasantly, father, for I ran fast and eagerly to bring thee the pitcher and the cake, and my body is not yet cool. How happy the squirrels are that feed on these fir-trees! they leap from bough to bough, and the old squirrels play round their young ones in the nest. I climb a tree yesterday at noon, O my father, that I might play with them; but they leapt away from the branches, even to the slender twigs did they leap, and in a moment I beheld them on another tree. Why, O my father, would they not play with me? I would be good to them as thou art good to me: and I groaned to them even as thou groanest when thou givest me to eat, and when thou coverest me at evening, and as often as I stand at thy knee and thine eyes look at me. » Then Cain stopped, and stifling his groans he sank to the earth, and the child Enos stood in the darkness beside him.

And Cain lifted up his voice and cried bitterly, and said, « The Mighty One that persecuteth me is on this side and on that; he pursueth my soul like the wind, like the sand-blast he passeth through me; he is around me even as the air! O that I might be utterly no more! I desire to die—yea, the things that never had life, neither move they upon the earth—behold! they seem precious to mine eyes. O that a man might live without the breath of his nostrils! So I might abide in darkness, and blackness, and an empty space! Yea, I would lie down, I would not rise, neither would I stir my limbs till I became as the rock in the den of the lion, on which the young lion resteth his head whilst he sleepeth. For the torrent that roareth far off hath a voice, and the clouds in heaven look terribly on me; the Mighty One who is against me speaketh in the wind of the cedar grove; and in silence am I dried up.» Then Enos spake to his father: « Arise my father, arise, we are but a little way from the place where I found the cake and the pitcher.» And Cain said, « How knowest thou?» and the child answered—« Behold the bare rocks are a few of thy strides distant from the forest; and while even now thou wert lifting up thy voice, I heard the echo.» Then the child took hold of his father, as if he would raise him: and Cain being faint and feeble, rose slowly on his knees and pressed himself against the trunk of a fir, and stood upright, and followed the child.

The path was dark till within three strides' length of its termination, when it turned suddenly; the thick black trees formed a low arch, and the moonlight appeared for a moment like a dazzling portal. Enos ran before and stood in the open air; and when Cain, his father, emerged from the darkness, the child was affrighted. For the mighty limbs of Cain were wasted as by fire; his hair was as the matted curls on the Bison's forehead, and so glared his fierce and sullen eye beneath: and the black abundant locks on either side, a rank and tangled mass, were stained and scorched, as though the grasp of a burning iron hand had striven to rend them; and his countenance told in a strange and terrible language of agonies that had been, and were, and were still to continue to be.

The scene around was desolate; as far as the eye could reach it was desolate: the bare rocks faced each other, and left a long and wide interval of thin white sand. You might wander on and look round and round, and peep into the crevices of the rocks and discover nothing that acknowledged the influence of the seasons. There was no spring, no summer, no autumn: and the winter's snow, that would have been lovely, fell not on these hot rocks and scorching sands. Never morning lark had poised himself over this desert; but the huge serpent often hissed there beneath the talons of the vulture, and the vulture screamed, his wings imprisoned within the coils of the serpent. The pointed and shattered summits of the ridges of the rocks made a rude mimicry of human concerns, and seemed to prophecy mutely of things that then were not; steeples, and battlements, and ships with naked masts. As far from the wood as a boy might sling a pebble of the brook, there was one rock by itself at a small distance from the main ridge. It had been precipitated there perhaps by the groan which the Earth uttered when our first father fell. Before you approached, it appeared to lie flat on the ground, but its base slanted from its point, and between its point and the sands a tall man might stand upright. It was here that Enos had found the pitcher and cake, and to this place he led his father. But ere they had reached the rock they beheld a human shape: his back was towards them, and they were advancing unperceived, when they heard him smite his breast and cry aloud, « Wo is me! wo is me! I must never die again, and yet I am perishing with thirst and hunger.»

Pallid, as the reflection of the sheeted lightning on the heavy-sailing night-cloud, became the face of Cain; but the child Enos took hold of the shaggy skin, his father's robe, and raised his eyes to his father, and listening whispered, « Ere yet I could speak, I am sure, O my father! that I heard that voice. Have not I often said that I remembered a sweet voice. O my father! this is it:» and Cain trembled exceedingly. The voice was sweet indeed, but it was thin and querulous like that of a feeble slave in misery, who despairs altogether, yet cannot refrain himself from weeping and lamentation. And, behold! Enos glided forward, and creeping softly round the base of the rock, stood before the stranger, and looked up into his face. And the Shape shrieked, and turned round, and Cain beheld him, that his limbs and his face were those of his brother Abel whom he had killed! And Cain stood like one who struggles in his sleep because of the exceeding terribleness of a dream.

Thus as he stood in silence and darkness of soul, the Shape fell at his feet, and embraced his knees, and cried out with a bitter outery, « Thou eldest born of Adam, whom Eve, my mother, brought forth, cease to torment me! I was feeding my flocks in green pastures by the side of quiet rivers, and thou killedst me; and now I am in misery.» Then Cain closed his eyes, and hid them with his hands; and again he opened his eyes, and looked around him, and said to Enos, «What beholdest thou? Didst thou hear a voice, my son?» « Yes, my father, I beheld a man in unclean garments, and he uttered a sweet voice, full of lamentation.» Then Cain raised up the Shape that was like Abel, and said:—«The Creator of our father, who had respect unto thee, and unto thy offering, wherefore hath he forsaken thee?» Then the Shape shrieked a second time, and rent his garment, and his naked skin was like the white sands beneath their feet; and he shrieked yet a third time, and threw himself on his face upon the sand that was black with the shadow of the rock, and Cain and Enos sate beside him; the child by his right hand, and Cain by his left. They were all three under the rock, and within the shadow. The Shape that was like Abel raised himself up, and spake to the child: « I know where the cold waters are, but I may not drink; wherefore didst thou then take away my pitcher?» But Cain said, « Didst thou not find favour in the sight of the Lord thy God?» The Shape answered, «The Lord is God of the living only, the dead have another God.» Then the child Enos lifted up his eyes and prayed; but Cain rejoiced secretly in his heart. «Wretched shall they be all the days of their mortal life,» exclaimed the Shape, « who sacrifice worthy and acceptable sacrifices to the God of the dead; but after death their toil ceaseth. Woe is me, for I was well beloved by the God of the living, and cruel wert thou, O my brother, who didst snatch me away from his power and his dominion.» Having

uttered these words, he rose suddenly, and fled over the sands; and Cain said in his heart, « The curse of the Lord is on me; but who is the God of the dead?» and he ran after the Shape, and the Shape fled shrieking over the sands, and the sands rose like white mists behind the steps of Cain, but the feet of him that was like Abel disturbed not the sands. He greatly outran Cain, and turning short, he wheeled round, and came again to the rock where they had been sitting, and where Enos still stood; and the child caught hold of his garment as he passed by, and he fell upon the ground. And Cain stopped, and beholding him not, said, « he has passed into the dark woods,» and he walked slowly back to the rocks; and when he reached it the child told him that he had caught hold of his garment as he passed by, and that the man had fallen upon the ground: and Cain once more sate beside him, and said, « Abel, my brother, I would lament for thee, but that the spirit within me is withered, and burnt up with extreme agony. Now, I pray thee, by thy flocks, and by thy pastures, and by the quiet rivers which thou lovedst, that thou tell me all that thou knowest. Who is the God of the dead? where doth he make his dwelling? what sacrifices are acceptable unto him? for I have offered, but have not been received; I have prayed, and have not been heard; and how can I be afflicted more than I already am?» The Shape arose and answered, « O that thou hadst had pity on me as I will have pity on thee. Follow me, Son of Adam! and bring thy child with thee!»

And they three passed over the white sands between the rocks, silent as the shadows.

ALLEGORIC VISION.

A FEELING of sadness, a peculiar melancholy, is wont to take possession of me alike in Spring and in Autumn. But in Spring it is the melancholy of Hope: in Autumn it is the melancholy of Resignation. As I was journeying on foot through the Apennine, I fell in with a pilgrim in whom the Spring and the Autumn and the Melancholy of both seemed to have combined. In his discourse there were the freshness and the colours of April:

> Qual ramicel a ramo,
> Tal da pensier pensiero
> In lui germogliava.

But as I gazed on his whole form and figure, I bethought me of the not unlovely decays, both of age and of the late season, in the stately elm, after the clusters have been plucked from its entwining vines, and the vines are as bands of dried withies around its trunk and branches. Even so there was a memory on his smooth and ample forehead, which blended with the dedication of his steady eyes, that still looked—I know not, whether upward, or far onward, or rather to the line of meeting where the sky rests upon the distance. But how may I express that dimness of abstraction which lay on the lustre of the pilgrim's eyes, like the flitting tarnish from the breath of a sigh on a silver mirror! and which accorded with their slow and reluctant movement, whenever he turned them to any object on the right hand or on the left? It seemed, methought, as if there lay upon the brightness a shadowy presence of disappointments now unfelt, but never forgotten. It was at once the melancholy of hope and of resignation.

We had not long been fellow-travellers, ere a sudden tempest of wind and rain forced us to seek protection in the vaulted door-way of a lone chapelry: and we sate face to face each on the stone bench along-side the low, weather-stained wall, and as close as possible to the massy door.

After a pause of silence: Even thus, said he, like two strangers that have fled to the same shelter from the same storm, not seldom do Despair and Hope meet for the first time in the porch of Death! All extremes meet, I answered; but yours was a strange and visionary thought. The better then doth it beseem both the place and me, he replied. From a Visionary wilt thou hear a Vision? Mark that vivid flash through this torrent of rain! Fire and water. Even here thy adage holds true, and its truth is the moral of my Vision. I entreated him to proceed. Sloping his face toward the arch and yet averting his eye from it, he seemed to seek and prepare his words: till listening to the wind that echoed within the hollow edifice, and to the rain without,

> Which stole on his thoughts with its two-fold sound,
> The clash hard by and the murmur all round,

he gradually sunk away, alike from me and from his own purpose, and amid the gloom of the storm, and in the duskiness of that place, he sate like an emblem on a rich man's sepulchre, or like a mourner on the sodded grave of an only one—an aged mourner, who is watching the waned moon and sorroweth not. Starting at length from his brief trance of abstraction, with courtesy and an atoning smile he renewed his discourse, and commenced his parable.

During one of those short furloughs from the service of the Body, which the Soul may sometimes obtain even in this, its militant state, I found myself in a vast plain, which I immediately knew to be the Valley of Life. It possessed an astonishing diversity of soils: and here was a sunny spot, and there a dark one, forming just such a mixture of sunshine and shade, as we may have observed on the mountains' side in an April day, when the thin broken clouds are scattered over heaven. Almost in the very entrance of the valley stood a large and gloomy pile, into which I seemed constrained to enter. Every part of the building was crowded with tawdry ornaments and fantastic deformity. On every window was pourtrayed, in glaring and inelegant colours, some horrible tale, or preternatural incident, so that not a ray of light could enter, untinged by the medium through which it passed. The body of the building was full of people, some of them dancing, in and out, in unintelligible figures, with strange ceremonies and antic merriment, while others seemed convulsed with horror, or pining in mad melancholy. Intermingled with these, I observed a number of men, clothed in ceremonial robes, who appeared, now to marshal the various groups and to direct their movements, and now with menacing countenances, to drag some reluctant victim to a vast idol, framed of iron bars intercrossed, which formed at the same time an immense cage, and the shape of a human Colossus.

I stood for a while lost in wonder what these things might mean; when lo! one of the directors came up to me, and with a stern and reproachful look bade me

uncover my head, for that the place into which I had entered was the temple of the only true Religion, in the holier recess of which the great Goddess personally resided. Himself too he bade me reverence, as the consecrated minister of her rites. Awe-struck by the name of Religion, I bowed before the priest, and humbly and earnestly intreated him to conduct me into her presence. He assented. Offerings he took from me, with mystic sprinklings of water and with salt he purified, and with strange sufflations he exorcised me; and then led me through many a dark and winding alley, the dew-damps of which chilled my flesh, and the hollow echoes under my feet, mingled, methought, with moanings, affrighted me. At length we entered a large hall, without window, or spiracle, or lamp. The asylum and dormitory it seemed of perennial night—only that the walls were brought to the eye by a number of self luminous inscriptions in letters of a pale pulchral light, that held strange neutrality with the darkness, on the verge of which it kept its rayless vigil. I could read them, methought; but though each one of the words taken separately I seemed to understand, yet when I took them in sentences, they were riddles and incomprehensible. As I stood meditating on these hard sayings, my guide thus addressed me—Read and believe: these are Mysteries!—At the extremity of the vast hall the Goddess was placed. Her features, blended with darkness, rose out to my view, terrible, yet vacant. I prostrated myself before her, and then retired with my guide, soul-withered, and wondering, and dissatisfied.

As I re-entered the body of the temple, I heard a deep buzz as of discontent. A few whose eyes were bright, and either piercing or steady, and whose ample foreheads, with the weighty bar, ridge-like, above the eyebrows, bespoke observation followed by meditative thought; and a much larger number, who were enraged by the severity and insolence of the priests in exacting their offerings, had collected in one tumultuous group, and with a confused outcry of «this is the Temple of Superstition!» after much contumely, and turmoil, and cruel mal-treatment on all sides, rushed out of the pile: and I, methought, joined them.

We speeded from the Temple with hasty steps, and had now nearly gone round half the valley, when we were addressed by a woman, tall beyond the stature of mortals, and with a something more than human in her countenance and mien, which yet could by mortals be only felt, not conveyed by words or intelligibly distinguished. Deep reflection, animated by ardent feelings, was displayed in them: and hope, without its uncertainty, and a something more than all these, which I understood not, but which yet seemed to blend all these into a divine unity of expression. Her garments were white and matronly, and of the simplest texture. We inquired her name. My name, she replied, is Religion.

The more numerous part of our company, affrighted by the very sound, and sore from recent impostures or sorceries, hurried onwards and examined no farther. A few of us, struck by the manifest opposition of her form and manners to those of the living Idol, whom we had so recently abjured, agreed to follow her, though with cautious circumspection. She led us to an eminence in the midst of the valley, from the top of which we could command the whole plain, and observe the relation of the different parts of each to the other, and of each to the whole, and of all to each. She then gave us an optic glass which assisted without contradicting our natural vision, and enabled us to see far beyond the limits of the Valley of Life: though our eye even thus assisted permitted us only to behold a light and a glory, but what we could not descry, save only that it *was*, and that it was most glorious.

And now, with the rapid transition of a dream, I had overtaken and rejoined the more numerous party, who had abruptly left us, indignant at the very name of religion. They journeyed on, goading each other with remembrances of past oppressions, and never looking back, till in the eagerness to recede from the Temple of Superstition, they had rounded the whole circle of the valley. And lo! there faced us the mouth of a vast cavern, at the base of a lofty and almost perpendicular rock, the interior side of which, unknown to them, and unsuspected, formed the extreme and backward wall of the Temple. An impatient crowd, we entered the vast and dusky cave, which was the only perforation of the precipice. At the mouth of the cave sate two figures; the first, by her dress and gestures, I knew to be SENSUALITY; the second form, from the fierceness of his demeanour, and the brutal scornfulness of his looks, declared himself to be the monster BLASPHEMY. He uttered big words, and yet ever and anon I observed that he turned pale at his own courage. We entered. Some remained in the opening of the cave, with the one or the other of its guardians. The rest, and I among them, pressed on, till we reached an ample chamber, that seemed the centre of the rock. The climate of the place was unnaturally cold.

In the furthest distance of the chamber sate an old dim-eyed man, poring with a microscope over the Torso of a statue which hath neither basis, nor feet, nor head; but on its breast was carved NATURE! To this he continually applied his glass, and seemed enraptured with the various inequalities which it rendered visible on the seemingly polished surface of the marble.—Yet evermore was this delight and triumph followed by expressions of hatred, and vehement railings against a Being, who yet, he assured us, had no existence. This mystery suddenly recalled to me what I had read in the Holiest Recess of the temple of *Superstition*. The old man spoke in divers tongues, and continued to utter other and most strange mysteries. Among the rest he talked much and vehemently concerning an infinite series of causes and effects, which he explained to be—a string of blind men, the last of whom caught hold of the skirt of the one before him, he of the next, and so on till they were all out of sight: and that they all walked infallibly straight, without making one false step, though all were alike blind. Methought I borrowed courage from surprise, and asked him—Who then is at the head to guide them? He looked at me with ineffable contempt, not unmixed with an angry suspicion, and then replied, «No one.» The string of blind men went on for ever without any beginning: for although one blind man could not move without stumbling, yet infinite blindness supplied the want of sight. I burst into laughter, which instantly turned to terror—for as he started forward in rage, I caught a glance of him from behind; and lo! I beheld a monster bi-form and Janus-headed, in the hinder face and shape of which I instantly recognized the dread countenance of SUPERSTITION—and in the terror I awoke.

THE IMPROVISATORE;

OR « JOHN ANDERSON, MY JO, JOHN. »

SCENE:—*A spacious drawing-room, with music-room adjoining.*

CATHERINE.

What are the words?

ELIZA.

Ask our friend, the Improvisatore; here he comes: Kate has a favour to ask of you, Sir; it is that you will repeat the ballad that Mr —— sung so sweetly.

FRIEND.

It is in Moore's Irish Melodies; but I do not recollect the words distinctly. The moral of them, however, I take to be this:—

Love would remain the same if true,
When we were neither young nor new:
Yea, and in all within the will that came,
By the same proofs would show itself the same.

ELIZA.

What are the lines you repeated from Beaumont and Fletcher, which my brother admired so much? It begins with something about two vines so close that their tendrils intermingle.

FRIEND.

You mean Charles' speech to Angelina, in « the Elder Brother. »

We 'll live together, like two neighbour vines,
Circling our souls and loves in one another!
We 'll spring together, and we 'll bear one fruit;
One joy shall make us smile, and one grief mourn!
One age go with us, and one hour of death
Shall close our eyes, and one grave make us happy.

CATHERINE.

A precious boon, that would go far to reconcile one to old age—this love, *if* true! But is there any such true love?

FRIEND.

I hope so.

CATHERINE.

But do you believe it?

ELIZA (*eagerly*.)

I am sure he does.

FRIEND.

From a man turned of fifty, Catherine, I imagine, expects a less confident answer.

CATHERINE.

A more sincere one, perhaps,

FRIEND.

Even though he should have obtained the nick-name of Improvisatore, by perpetrating charades and extempore verses at Christmas times?

ELIZA.

Nay, but be serious.

FRIEND.

Serious? Doubtless. A grave personage of my years giving a love-lecture to two young ladies, cannot well be otherwise. The difficulty, I suspect, would be for them to remain so. It will be asked whether I am not the « elderly gentleman » who sate « despairing beside a clear stream, » with a willow for his wig-block.

ELIZA.

Say another word, and we will call it downright affectation.

CATHERINE.

No! we will be affronted, drop a courtesy, and ask pardon for our presumption in expecting that Mr —— would waste his sense on two insignificant girls.

FRIEND.

Well, well I will be serious. Hem! Now then commences the discourse; Mr Moore's song being the text. Love, as distinguished from Friendship, on the one hand, and from the passion that too often usurps its name, on the other—

LUCIUS.

(*Eliza's brother, who had just joined the trio, in a whisper to the Friend.*) But is not Love the union of both?

FRIEND (*aside to* LUCIUS).

He never loved who thinks so.

ELIZA.

Brother, we don't want *you*. There! Mrs H. cannot arrange the flower-vase without you. Thank you, Mrs Hartman.

LUCIUS.

I 'll have my revenge! I know what I will say!

ELIZA.

Off! off! Now, dear sir,—Love, you were saying—

FRIEND.

Hush! *Preaching*, you mean, Eliza.

ELIZA (*impatiently*).

Pshaw!

FRIEND.

Well then, I was *saying* that Love, truly such, is itself not the most common thing in the world: and mutual love still less so. But that enduring personal attachment, so beautifully delineated by Erin's sweet melodist, and still more touchingly, perhaps, in the well-known ballad, « John Anderson my jo, John, » in addition to a depth and constancy of character of no every-day occurrence, supposes a peculiar sensibility and tenderness of nature; a constitutional communicativeness and *utterancy* of heart and soul; a delight in the detail of sympathy, in the outward and visible signs of the sacrament within—to count, as it were, the pulses of the life of love. But above all, it supposes a soul which, even in the pride and summer-tide of life —even in the lustihood of health and strength, had felt oftenest and prized highest that which age cannot take away, and which, in all our lovings, is *the* Love;——

ELIZA.

There is something *here* (*pointing to her heart*) that *seems* to understand you, but wants the *word* that would make it understand itself.

CATHERINE.

I, too, seem to *feel* what you mean. Interpret the feeling for us.

FRIEND.

——I mean that *willing* sense of the insufficingness of the *self* for itself, which predisposes a generous nature to see, in the total being of another, the supplement and completion of its own—that quiet perpetual *seeking* which the presence of the beloved object modulates, not suspends, where the heart momently finds, and, finding, again seeks on—lastly, when « life's changeful orb has pass'd the full, » a confirmed faith in the nobleness of humanity, thus brought home and pressed, as it were, to the very bosom of hourly experience: it supposes, I say, a heart-felt reverence for worth, not the less deep because divested of its solemnity by habit, by

familiarity, by mutual infirmities, and even by a feeling of modesty which will arise in delicate minds, when they are conscious of possessing the same or the correspondent excellence in their own characters. In short, there must be a mind, which, while it feels the beautiful and the excellent in the beloved as its own, and by right of love appropriates it, can call Goodness its Playfellow; and dares make sport of time and infirmity, while, in the person of a thousand-foldly endeared partner, we feel for aged VIRTUE the caressing fondness that belongs to the INNOCENCE of childhood, and repeat the same attentions and tender courtesies as had been dictated by the same affection to the same object when attired in feminine loveliness or in manly beauty.

ELIZA.

What a'soothing—what an elevating idea!

CATHERINE.

If it be not only an *idea*.

FRIEND.

At all events, these qualities which I have enumerated, are rarely found united in a single individual. How much more rare must it be, that two such individuals should meet together in this wide world under circumstances that admit of their union as Husband and Wife. A person may be highly estimable on the whole, nay, amiable as neighbour, friend, housemate—in short, in all the concentric circles of attachment, save only the last and inmost; and yet from how many causes be estranged from the highest perfection in this? Pride, coldness or fastidiousness of nature, worldly cares, an anxious or ambitious disposition, a passion for display, a sullen temper—one or the other—too often proves « the dead fly in the compost of spices,» and any one is enough to unfit it for the precious balm of unction. For some mighty good sort of people, too, there is not seldom a sort of solemn saturnine, or, if you will, *ursine* vanity, that keeps itself alive by sucking the paws of its own self-importance. And as this high sense, or rather sensation of their own value is, for the most part, grounded on negative qualities, so they have no better means of preserving the same but by *negatives*—that is, by *not* doing or saying any thing, that might be put down for fond, silly, or nonsensical,—or (to use their own phrase) by *never forgetting themselves*, which some of their acquaintance are uncharitable enough to think the most worthless object they could be employed in remembering.

ELIZA (*in answer to a whisper from* CATHERINE).

To a hair! He must have sate for it himself. Save me from such folks! But they are out of the question.

FRIEND.

True! but the same effect is produced in thousands by the too general insensibility to a very important truth; this, namely, that the MISERY of human life is made up of large masses, each separated from the other by certain intervals. One year, the death of a child; years after, a failure in trade; after another longer or shorter interval, a daughter may have married unhappily;—in all but the singularly unfortunate, the integral parts that compose the sum total of the unhappiness of a man's life, are easily counted, and distinctly remembered. The HAPPINESS of life, on the contrary, is made up of minute fractions—the little, soon-forgotten charities of a kiss, a smile, a kind look, a heartfelt compliment in the disguise of playful raillery, and the countless other infinitesimals of pleasureable thought and genial feeling.

CATHERINE.

Well, Sir; you have said quite enough to make me despair of finding a « John Anderson, my jo, John,» to totter down the hill of life with.

FRIEND.

Not so! Good men are not, I trust, so much scarcer than good women, but that what another would find in you, you may hope to find in another. But well, however, may that boon be rare, the possession of which would be more than an adequate reward for the rarest virtue.

ELIZA.

Surely, he who has described it so beautifully, must have possessed it?

FRIEND.

If he were worthy to have possessed it, and had believingly anticipated and not found it, how bitter the disappointment!

(*Then, after a pause of a few minutes*).

ANSWER (*ex improviso*).

Yes, yes! that boon, life's richest treat,
He had, or fancied that he had;
Say, 't was but in his own conceit—
  The fancy made him glad!
Crown of his cup, and garnish of his dish!
The boon, prefigured in his earliest wish!
The fair fulfilment of his poesy,
When his young heart first yearn'd for sympathy!

But e'en the meteor offspring of the brain
  Unnourish'd wane!
Faith asks her daily bread,
And Fancy must be fed!
Now so it chanced—from wet or dry,
It boots not how—I know not why—
She missed her wonted food: and quickly
Poor Fancy stagger'd and grew sickly.
Then came a restless state, 't wixt yea and nay,
His faith was fix'd, his heart all ebb and flow;
Or like a bark, in some half-shelter'd bay,
Above its anchor driving to and fro.

That boon, which but to have possess'd
In a *belief*, gave live a zest—
Uncertain both what it *had* been,
And if by error lost, or luck;
And what it *was*:—an evergreen
Which some insidious blight had struck,
Or annual flower, which, past its blow,
No vernal spell shall e'er revive;
Uncertain, and afraid to know,
  Doubts toss'd him to and fro;
Hope keeping Love, Love Hope alive,
Like babes bewilder'd in a snow,
That cling and huddle from the cold
In hollow tree or ruin'd fold.

Those sparkling colours, once his boast,
  Fading, one by one away,
Thin and hueless as a ghost,
  Poor Fancy on her sick-bed lay;
Ill at distance, worse when near,
Telling her dreams to jealous Fear!

Where was it then, the sociable sprite
That crown'd the Poet's cup and deck'd his dish!
Poor shadow cast from an unsteady wish,
Itself a substance by no other right
But that it intercepted Reason's light;
It dimm'd his eye, it darken'd on his brow,
A peevish mood, a tedious time, I trow!
Thank Heaven! 't is not so now.

O bliss of blissful hours!
The boon of Heaven's decreeing,
While yet in Eden's bowers
Dwelt the First Husband and his sinless Mate!
The one sweet plant, which, piteous Heaven agreeing,
They bore with them through Eden's closing gate!
Of life's gay summer-tide the sovran Rose!
Late autumn's Amaranth, that more fragrant blows
When Passion's flowers all fall or fade;
If this were ever his, in outward being,
Or but his own true love's projected shade,
Now that at length by certain proof he knows,
That whether real or a magic show,
Whate'er it *was*, it *is* no longer so;
Though heart be lonesome, Hope laid low,
Yet, Lady! deem him not unblest:
The certainty that struck Hope dead,
Hath left Contentment in her stead:
And that is next to best!

THE GARDEN OF BOCCACCIO.

Of late, in one of those most weary hours,
When life seems emptied of all genial powers,
A dreary mood, which he who ne'er has known
May bless his happy lot, I sate alone;
And, from the numbing spell to win relief,
Call'd on the past for thought of glee or grief.
In vain! bereft alike of grief and glee,
I sate and cower'd o'er my own vacancy!
And as I watched the dull continuous ache,
Which, all else slumb'ring, seem'd alone to wake;
O Friend! long wont to notice yet conceal,
And soothe by silence what words cannot heal,
I but half saw that quiet hand of thine
Place on my desk this exquisite design,
Boccaccio's Garden and its faëry,
The love, the joyaunce, and the gallantry!
An Idyll, with Boccaccio's spirit warm,
Framed in the silent poesy of form.
Like flocks adown a newly-bathed steep
Emerging from a mist: or like a stream
Of music soft that not dispels the sleep,
But casts in happier moulds the slumberer's dream,
Gazed by an idle eye with silent might
The picture stole upon my inward sight.
A tremulous warmth crept gradual o'er my chest,
As though an infant's finger touch'd my breast.
And one by one (I know not whence) were brought
All spirits of power that most had stirr'd my thought
In selfless boyhood, on a new world tost
Of wonder, and in its own fancies lost;
Or charm'd my youth, that, kindled from above,
Loved ere it loved, and sought a form for love;
Or lent a lustre to the earnest scan
Of manhood, musing what and whence is man!
Wild strain of Scalds, that in the sea-worn caves
Rehearsed their war-spell to the winds and waves;
Or fateful hymn of those prophetic maids,
That call'd on Hertha in deep forest glades;
Or minstrel lay, that cheer'd the baron's feast;
Or rhyme of city pomp, of monk and priest,
Judge, mayor, and many a guild in long array,
To high-church pacing on the great saint's day.
And many a verse which to myself I sang,
That woke the tear, yet stole away the pang,
Of hopes which in lamenting I renew'd.
And last, a matron now, of sober mien,
Yet radiant still and with no earthly sheen,
Whom as a faery child my childhood woo'd
Even in my dawn of thought—Philosophy.
Though then unconscious of herself, pardie,
She bore no other name than poesy;
And, like a gift from heaven, in lifeful glee,
That had but newly left a mother's knee,
Prattled and play'd with bird and flower, and stone,
As if with elfin playfellows well known,
And life reveal'd to innocence alone.

Thanks, gentle artist! now I can descry
Thy fair creation with a mastering eye,
And *all* awake! And now in fix'd gaze stand,
Now wander through the Eden of thy hand;
Praise the green arches, on the fountain clear
See fragment shadows of the crossing deer,
And with that serviceable nymph I stoop,
The crystal from its restless pool to scoop.
I see no longer! I myself am there,
Sit on the ground-sward, and the banquet share.
'T is I, that sweep that lute's love-echoing strings,
And gaze upon the maid who gazing sings:
Or pause and listen to the tinkling bells
From the high tower, and think that there she dwells.
With old Boccaccio's soul I stand possest,
And breathe an air like life, that swells my chest.

The brightness of the world, O thou once free,
And always fair, rare land of courtesy!
O, Florence! with the Tuscan fields and hills!
And famous Arno fed with all their rills;
Thou brightest star of star-bright Italy!
Rich, ornate, populous, all treasures thine,
The golden corn, the olive, and the vine.
Fair cities, gallant mansions, castles old,
And forests, where beside his leafy hold
The sullen boar hath heard the distant horn,
And whets his tusks against the gnarled thorn;
Palladian palace with its storied halls;
Fountains, where Love lies listening to their falls;
Gardens, where flings the bridge its airy span,
And Nature makes her happy home with man;
Where many a gorgeous flower is duly fed
With its own rill, on its own spangled bed,
And wreathes the marble urn, or leans its head,
A mimic mourner, that with veil withdrawn
Weeps liquid gems, the presents of the dawn,
Thine all delights, and every muse is thine:
And more than all, the embrace and intertwine
Of all with all in gay and twinkling dance!
'Mid gods of Greece and warriors of romance,

See! Boccace sits, unfolding on his knees
The new-found roll of old Mæonides;[1]
But from his mantle's fold, and near the heart,
Peers Ovid's Holy Book of Love's sweet smart![2]

O all-enjoying and all-blending sage,
Long be it mine to con thy mazy page,
Where, half conceal'd, the eye of fancy views
Fauns, nymphs, and winged saints, all gracious to thy muse!

Still in thy garden let me watch their pranks,
And see in Dian's vest between the ranks
Of the trim vines, some maid that half believes
The *vestal* fires, of which her lover grieves,
With that sly satyr peeping through the leaves!

[1] Boccaccio claimed for himself the glory of having first introduced the works of Homer to his countrymen.

[2] I know few more striking or more interesting proofs of the overwhelming influence which the study of the Greek and Roman classics exercised on the judgments, feelings, and imaginations of the literati of Europe at the commencement of the restoration of literature, than the passage in the Filocopo of Boccaccio: where the sage instructor, Racheo, as soon as the young prince and the beautiful girl Biancafiore had learned their letters, sets them to study the *Holy Book*, Ovid's Art of Love. « Incominciò Racheo a mettere il suo officio in esecuzione con intera sollecitudine. E loro, in breve tempo, insegnato a conoscer le lettere, *fece legere il santo libro d' Ovidio, nel quale il sommo poeta mostra, come i santi fuochi di Venere si debbano ne freddi cuori accendere.*»

THE END.

THE

POETICAL WORKS

OF

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY.

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Epitaph . . . . . *ib.*
The Waning Moon . . . . . *ib.*

The Publishers of the present edition of Mr Shelley's Poetical Works think it necessary to state, that the first poem in the collection, « THE REVOLT OF ISLAM,» did not originally bear that title: it appeared under the name of « LAON AND CYTHNA; *or the Revolution of the Golden City: a Vision of the Nineteenth Century.*» But, with the exception of this change of name,—into the reasons that led to which it is now unnecessary to inquire—some inconsiderable verbal corrections, and the omission of the following paragraph and note in the preface, the poem is in all respects the same as when first given to the public.

« In the personal conduct of my hero and heroine, there is one circumstance which was intended to startle the reader from the trance of ordinary life. It was my object to break through the crust of those outworn opinions on which established institutions depend. I have appealed, therefore, to the most universal of all feelings, and have endeavoured to strengthen the moral sense, by forbidding it to waste its energies in seeking to avoid actions which are only crimes of convention. It is because there is so great a multitude of artificial vices, that there are so few real virtues. Those feelings alone which are benevolent or malevolent are essentially good or bad. The circumstance of which I speak was introduced, however, merely to accustom men to that charity and toleration, which the exhibition of a practice widely differing from their own has a tendency to promote.[1] Nothing, indeed, can be more mischievous than many actions innocent in themselves, which might bring down upon individuals the bigoted contempt and rage of the multitude.»

[1] The sentiments connected with and characteristic of this circumstance have no personal reference to the writer.

Memoir of Percy Bysshe Shelley.

Field-Place, in the county of Sussex, was the spot where Percy Bysshe Shelley first saw the light. He was born on the 4th of August, 1792; and was the eldest son of Sir Timothy Shelley, Bart. of Castle-Goring. His family is an ancient one, and a branch of it has become the representative of the house of the illustrious Sir Philip Sidney of Penshurst. Despising honours which only rest upon the accidental circumstances of birth, Shelley was proud of this connection with an immortal name. At the customary age, about thirteen, he was sent to Eton School, and before he had completed his fifteenth year, he published two novels, the *Rosicrucian* and *Zasterozzi*. From Eton he removed to University College, Oxford, to mature his studies; at the age of sixteen, an earlier period than is usual. At Oxford he was, according to custom, imbued with the elements of logic; and he ventured, in contempt of the fiat of the University, to apply them to the investigation of questions which it is orthodox to take for granted. His original and uncompromising spirit of inquiry could not reconcile the limited use of logical principles. He boldly tested, or attempted to test, propositions which he imagined, the more they were obscure, and the more claim they had upon his credence, the greater was the necessity for examining them. His spirit was an inquiring one, and he fearlessly sought after what he believed to be truth, before, it is probable, he had acquired all the information necessary to guide him, from collateral sources—a common error of headstrong youth. This is the more likely to be the case, as when time had matured his knowledge, he differed much on points upon which, in callow years and without an instructor, flung upon the world to form his own principles of action, guileless, and vehement, he was wont to advocate strongly. Shelley possessed the bold quality of inquiring into the reason of every thing, and of resisting what he could not reconcile to be right according to his conscience. In some persons this has been denominated a virtue, in others a sin—just as it might happen to chime in with worldly custom or received opinion. At school he formed a conspiracy for resistance to that most odious and detestable custom of English seminaries, *fagging*, which pedagogues are bold enough to defend openly at the present hour.

At Oxford he imprudently printed a dissertation on the being of a God, which caused his expulsion in his second term, as he refused to retract any of his opinions; and thereby incurred the marked displeasure of his father. This expulsion arising, as he believed conscientiously, from his avowal of what he thought to be true, did not deeply affect him. His mind seems to have been wandering in a maze of doubt at times between truth and error, ardently desirous of finding the truth, warm in its pursuit, but without a pole-star to guide him in steering after it. In this state of things he met with the *Political Justice* of Godwin, and read it with eagerness and delight. What he had wanted he had now found; he determined that justice should be his sole guide, and justice alone. He regarded not whether what he did was after the fashion of the world; he pursued the career he had marked out with sincerity, and excited censure for some of his actions and praise for others, bordering upon wonder, in proportion as they were singular, or as their motives could not be appreciated. His notions at the University tended to atheism; and in a work which he published entitled « Queen Mab,» it is evident that this doctrine had at one time a hold upon his mind. This was printed for private circulation only, and was pirated by a knavish bookseller and given to the public, long after the writer had altered many of the opinions expressed in it, disclaimed it, and lamented its having been printed. He spoke of the commonly-received notions of God with contempt; and hence the idea that he denied the being of any superintending first cause. He was not on this head sufficiently explicit. He seemed hopeless, in moments of low spirits, of there being such a ruling power as he wished, yet he ever clung to the idea of some « great spirit of intellectual beauty» being throughout all things. His life was inflexibly moral and benevolent. He acted up to the theory of his received doctrine of justice; and, after all the censures that were cast upon him, who shall impugn the man who thus acts and lives?

Shelley married at an early age a Miss Harriet Westbrooke, a very beautiful girl, much younger than himself, daughter of a coffeehouse-keeper, retired from business. By this marriage he so irritated his father, that he was entirely abandoned by him; but the lady's father allowed them 200*l.* per annum, and they resided some time in Edinburgh and then in Ireland. The match was a Gretna-green one, and did not turn out happily. By this connection he had two children, the youngest of whom, born in 1815, is since dead. Consistent with his own views of marriage and its institution, Shelley paid his addresses to another lady, Miss Godwin, with whom, in July, 1814, he fled, accompanied by Miss Jane Claremont, her sister-in-law, to Uri, in Switzerland, from whence, after a few days' residence, they suddenly quitted suspecting they were watched by another lodger; they departed for Paris on foot, and there found that the person to whom they had confided a large trunk of clothes, had absconded with them: this hastened their return to England. A child was the fruit of this expedition. Shortly after they again quitted England and went to Geneva, Como and Venice. In a few months they revisited England, and took up their abode in Bath, from whence Shelley was suddenly called by the unexpected suicide of his wife, who destroyed herself on the 10th November, 1816. Her fate hung heavy on the mind of her husband, who felt deep self-reproach that he had not selected a female of a higher order of intellect, who could appreciate better the feelings of one constituted as he was. Both were entitled to compassion, and both were sufferers by this unfortunate alliance. Shortly after the death of his first wife, Shelley, at the solicitation of her father, married Mary Wolstonecraft Godwin, daughter of the celebrated authoress of the *Rights of Woman*; and went to reside at Great Marlow in Buckinghamshire. That this second hymen was diametrically opposed to his own sentiments will be apparent from the following letter, addressed to Sir James Lawrence, on the perusal of one of that gentleman's works:—

« *Lymouth, Barnstaple, Devon, August* 17, 1812.

« Sir,—I feel peculiar satisfaction in seizing the opportunity which your politeness places in my power, of expressing to you personally (as I may say) a high acknowledgement of my sense of your talents and principles, which, before I conceived it possible that I should ever know you, I sincerely entertained. Your « Empire of the Nairs,» which I read this spring, succeeded in making me a perfect convert to its doctrines. I then retained no doubts of the evils of marriage; Mrs Wolstonecraft reasons too well for that; but I had been dull enough not to perceive the greatest argument against it, until developed in the « Nairs,» viz. prostitution both *legal* and *illegal*.

« I am a young man, not of age, and have been married a year to a woman younger than myself. Love seems inclined to stay in the prison, and my only reason for putting him in chains, whilst convinced of the unholiness of the act, was a knowledge, that in the present state of society, if love is not thus villainously treated, she, who is most loved, will be treated worse by a misjudging world. In short, seduction, which term could have no meaning in a rational society, has now a most tremendous one; the fictitious merit attached to chastity has made that a forerunner to the most terrible ruins, which in Malabar would be a pledge of honour and homage. If there is any enormous and desolating crime of which I should shudder to be accused, it is seduction. I need not say how I admire « Love,» and little as a British public seems to appreciate its merit, in not permitting it to emerge from a first edition, it is with satisfaction I find, that justice had conceded abroad what bigotry has denied at home. I shall take the liberty of sending you any little publication I may give to the world. Mrs S. joins with myself in hoping, if we come to London this winter, we may be favoured with the personal friendship of one whose writings we have learnt to esteem.

«Yours, very truly, Percy Bysshe Shelley.»

A circumstance arose out of his first marriage which attracted a good deal of notice from the public. As we have already mentioned, there were two children left, whom the Lord Chancellor Eldon took away from their father by one of his own arbitrary decrees, because the religious sentiments of Shelley were avowedly heterodox. No immorality of life, no breach of parental duty was attempted to be proved; it was sufficient that the father did not give credit to religion as established by act of parliament, to cause the closest ties of nature to be rent asunder, and the connection of father and child to be for ever broken. This despotism of a law-officer has since been displayed in another case, where immorality of the parent was the alleged cause. Had the same law-officer, unhappily for England, continued to preside, no doubt the political sentiments of the parent would by and by furnish an excuse for such a monstrous tyranny over the rights of nature.

Shelley for ever sought to make mankind and things around him in harmony with a better state of moral existence. He was too young and inexperienced when he first acted upon this principle too perceive the obstacles which opposed the progress of his views, arising out of the

usages and customs which rule mankind, and which, from the nature of things, it takes a long time to overcome. Ardent in the pursuit of the good he sought, he was always ready to meet the consequences of his actions; and if any condemn them for their mistaken views, they ought to feel that charity should forbid their arraigning motives, when such proofs of sincerity were before them. The vermin who, under the specious title of « reviewers,» seek in England to crush every bud of genius that appears out of the pale of their own party, fell mercilessly upon the works of Shelley. The beauty and profundity which none but the furious zealots of a faction could deny—these were passed over in a sweeping torrent of vulgar vituperation by the servile and venal *Quarterly*.

During his residence at Great Marlow, he composed his *Revolt of Islam*. In 1817 he left England, never to return to it, and directed his steps to Italy, where he resided partly at Venice, partly at Pisa near his friend Byron, and on the neighbouring coast. In the month of June 1822 he was temporarily a resident in a house situated on the Gulf of Lerici. Being much attached to sea-excursions, he kept a boat, in which he was in the habit of cruising along the coast. On the 7th of July, he set sail from Leghorn, where he had been to meet Mr Leigh Hunt, who had just then arrived in Italy, intending to return to Lerici. But he never reached that place; the boat in which he set sail was lost in a violent storm, and all on board perished. The following particulars of that melancholy event are extracted from the work of Mr Leigh Hunt, entitled, « Lord Byron and some of his Contemporaries.»

« In June 1822, I arrived in Italy, in consequence of the invitation to set up a work with my friend and Lord Byron. Mr Shelley was passing the summer season at a house he had taken for that purpose on the Gulf of Lerici; and on hearing of my arrival at Leghorn, came thither, accompanied by Mr Williams, formerly of the 8th Dragoons, who was then on a visit to him. He came to welcome his friend and family, and see us comfortably settled at Pisa. He accordingly went with us to that city, and after remaining in it a few days, took leave on the night of the 7th July, to return with Mr Williams to Lerici, meaning to come back to us shortly. In a day or two the voyagers were missed. The afternoon of the 8th had been stormy, with violent squalls from the southwest. A night succeeded, broken up with that tremendous thunder and lightning, which appals the stoutest seaman in the Mediterranean, dropping its bolts in all directions more like melted brass, or liquid pillars of fire, than any thing we conceive of lightning in our northern climate. The suspense and anguish of their friends need not be dwelt upon. A dreadful interval took place of more than a week, during which every inquiry and every fond hope were exhausted. At the end of that period our worst fears were confirmed. The following narrative of the particulars is from the pen of Mr Trelawney, a friend of Lord Byron's, who had not long been acquainted with Mr Shelley, but entertained the deepest regard for him:—

« 'Mr Shelley, Mr Williams (formerly of the 8th Dragroons), and one seamen, Charles Vivian, left Villa Magni near Lerici, a small town situate in the Bay of Spezia, on the 30th of June, at twelve o'clock, and arrived the same night at Leghorn. Their boat had been built for Mr Shelley at Genoa by a captain in the navy. It was twenty-four feet long, eight in the beam, schooner-rigged, with gaft topsails, etc. and drew four feet water. On Monday, the 8th of July, at the same hour, they got under weigh to return home, having on board a quantity of household articles, four hundred dollars, a small canoe, and some books and manuscripts. At half past twelve they made all sail out of the harbour with a light and favourable breeze, steering direct for Spezia. I had likewise weighed anchor to accompany them a few miles out in Lord Byron's schooner, the Bolivar; but there was some demur about papers from the guard-boat; and they, fearful of losing the breeze, sailed without me. I re-anchored, and watched my friends, till their boat became a speck on the horizon, which was growing thick and dark, with heavy clouds moving rapidly, and gathering in the south-west quarter. I then retired to the cabin, where I had not been half an hour, before a man on deck told me a heavy squall had come on. We let go another anchor. The boats and vessels in the roads were scudding past us in all directions to get into harbour; and in a moment, it blew a hard gale from the south-west, the sea, from excessive smoothness, foaming, breaking, and getting up into a very heavy swell. The wind, having shifted, was now directly against my friends. I felt confident they would be obliged to bear off for Leghorn; and being anxious to hear of their safety, stayed on board till a late hour, but saw nothing of them. The violence of the wind did not continue above an hour; it then gradually subsided; and at eight o'clock, when I went on shore, it was almost a calm. It, however, blew hard at intervals during the night, with rain, and thunder and lightning. The lightning struck the mast of a vessel close to us, shivering it to splinters, killing two men, and wounding others. From these circumstances, becoming greatly alarmed for the safety of the voyagers, a note was despatched to Mr Shelley's house at Lerici, the reply to which stated that

nothing had been heard of him and his friend, which augmented our fears to such a degree, that couriers were despatched on the whole line of coast from Leghorn to Nice, to ascertain if they had put in any where, or if there had been any wreck, or indication of losses by sea. I immediately started for Via Reggio, having lost sight of the boat in that direction. My worst fears were almost confirmed on my arrival there, by news that a small canoe, two empty water-barrels, and a bottle, had been found on the shore, which things I recognised as belonging to the boat. I had still, however, warm hopes that these articles had been thrown overboard to clear them from useless lumber in the storm; and it seemed a general opinion that they had missed Leghorn, and put into Elba or Corsica, as nothing more was heard for eight days. This state of suspense becoming intolerable, I returned from Spezia to Via Reggio, where my worst fears were confirmed by the information that two bodies had been washed on shore, one on that night very near the town, which, by the dress and stature, I knew to be Mr Shelley's. Mr Keats's last volume of « Lamia,» « Isabella,» etc. being open in the jacket pocket, confirmed it beyond a doubt. The body of Mr Williams was subsequently found near a tower on the Tuscan shore, about four miles from his companion. Both the bodies were greatly decomposed by the sea, but identified beyond a doubt. The seaman, Charles Vivian, was not found for nearly three weeks afterwards:—his body was interred on the spot on which a wave had washed it, in the vicinity of Massa.

« 'After a variety of applications to the Lucchese and Tuscan governments, and our ambassador at Florence, I obtained, from the kindness and exertions of Mr Dawkins, an order to the officer commanding the tower of Migliarino (near to which Lieutenant Williams had been cast, and buried in the sand), that the body should be at my disposal. I likewise obtained an order to the same effect to the commandant at Via Reggio, to deliver up the remains of Mr Shelley, it having been decided by the friends of the parties that the bodies should be reduced to ashes by fire, as the readiest mode of conveying them to the places where the deceased would have wished to repose, as well as of removing all objections respecting the quarantine laws, which had been urged against their disinterment. Every thing being prepared for the requisite purposes, I embarked on board Lord Byron's schooner with my friend Captain Shenley, and sailed on the 13th of August. After a tedious passage of eleven hours, we anchored off Via Reggio, and fell in with two small vessels, which I had hired at Leghorn some days before for the purpose of ascertaining, by the means used to recover sunken vessels, the place in which my friend's boat had foundered. They had on board the captain of a fishing-boat, who, having been overtaken in the same squall, had witnessed the sinking of the boat, without (as he says) the possibility of assisting her. After dragging the bottom, in the place which he indicated, for six days without finding her, I sent them back to Leghorn, and went on shore. The major commanding the town, with the captain of the port, accompanied me to the governor. He received us very courteously, and did not object to the removal of our friend's remains, but to burning them, as the latter was not specified in the order. However, after some little explanation, he assented, and we gave the necessary directions for making every preparation to commence our painful undertaking next morning.'»

« It was thought that the whole of these melancholy operations might have been performed in one day: but the calculation turned out to be erroneous. Mr Williams's remains were commenced with. Mr Trelawney and Captain Shenley were at the tower by noon, with proper persons to assist, and were joined shortly by Lord Byron and myself. A portable furnace and a tent had been prepared. « Wood,» continues Mr Trelawney, « we found in abundance on the beach, old trees and parts of wrecks. Within a few paces of the spot where the body lay, there was a rude-built shed of straw, forming a temporary shelter for soldiers at night, when performing the coast-patrole duty. The grave was at high-water mark, some eighteen paces from the surf, as it was then breaking, the distance about four miles and a half from Via Reggio. The magnificent bay of Spezia is on the right of this spot, Leghorn on the left, at equal distances of about twenty-two miles. The headlands, projecting boldly and far into the sea, form a deep and dangerous gulf, with a heavy swell and a strong current generally running right into it. A vessel embayed in this gulf, and overtaken by one of the squalls so common upon the coast of it, is almost certain to be wrecked. The loss of small craft is great; and the shallowness of the water, and breaking of the surf, preventing approach to the shore, or boats going out to assist, the loss of lives is in proportion. It was in the centre of this bay, about four or five miles at sea, in fifteen or sixteen fathom water, with a light breeze under a crowd of sail, that the boat of our friends was suddenly taken clap aback by a sudden and very violent squall; and it is supposed that in attempting to bear up under such a press of canvas, all the sheets fast, the hands unprepared, and only three persons on board, the boat filled to leeward, and having two

tons of ballast, and not being decked, went down on the instant; not giving them a moment to prepare themselves by even taking off their boots, or seizing an oar. Mr Williams was the only one who could swim, and he but indifferently. The spot where Mr Williams's body lay was well adapted for a man of his imaginative cast of mind, and I wished his remains to rest undisturbed; but it was willed otherwise. Before us was the sea, with islands; behind us the Apennines; beside us, a large tract of thick wood, stunted and twisted into fantastic shapes by the sea-breeze.—The heat was intense, the sand being so scorched as to render standing on it painful.»

«Mr Trelawney proceeds to describe the disinterment and burning of Mr Williams's remains. Calumny, which never shows itself grosser than in its charges of want of refinement, did not spare even these melancholy ceremonies. The friends of the deceased, though they took no pains to publish the proceeding, were accused of wishing to make a sensation; of doing a horrible and unfeeling thing, etc. The truth was, that the nearest connexions, both of Mr Shelley and Mr Williams, wished to have their remains interred in regular places of burial; and that for this purpose they could be removed in no other manner. Such being the case, it is admitted that the mourners did not refuse themselves the little comfort of supposing that lovers of books and antiquity, like Mr Shelley and his friend, would not have been sorry to foresee this part of their fate. Among the materials for burning, as many of the gracefuller and more classical articles as could be procured,—frankincense, wine, etc.—were not forgotten.

«The proceedings of the next day, with Mr Shelley's remains, exactly resembled those of the foregoing, with the exception of there being two assistants less. On both days, the extraordinary beauty of the flame arising from the funeral pile was noticed. Mr Shelley's remains were taken to Rome, and deposited in the Protestant burial-ground, near those of a child he had lost in that city, and of Mr Keats. It is the cemetery he speaks of in the preface to his Elegy on the death of his young friend, as calculated to « make one in love with death, to think that one should be buried in so sweet a place.»—The generous reader will be glad to hear, that the remains of Mr Shelley were attended to their final abode by some of the most respectable English residents in Rome. He was sure to awaken the sympathy of gallant and accomplished spirits wherever he went, alive or dead. The remains of Mr Williams were taken to England. Mr Williams was a very intelligent, good-hearted man, and his death was deplored by friends worthy of him.——»

Shelley was thirty years old when he died. He was tall and slender in his figure, and stooped a little in the shoulders, though perfectly well-made. The expression of his features was mild and good. His complexion was fair, and his cheeks coloured. His eyes were large and lively; and the whole turn of his face, which was small, was graceful and full of sensibility. He was subject to attacks of a disorder which forced him to lie down (if in the open air, upon the ground) until they were over; yet he bore them kindly and without a murmur. His disposition was amiable, and even the word « pious» has been applied to his conduct as regarded others, to his love of nature, and to his ideas of that power which pervades all things. He was very fond of music; frugal in all but his charities, often to considerable self-denial, and loved to do acts of generosity and kindness. He was a first-rate scholar; and besides the languages of antiquity, well understood the German, Italian and French tongues. He was an excellent metaphysician, and was no slight adept in natural philosophy. He loved to study in the open air, in the shadow of the wood, or by the side of the water-fall. In short, he was a singular illustration of the force of natural genius, bursting the bonds of birth and habit, and the conventional ties of the circle in which he was born, and soaring high, under the direction of his own spirit, chartless and alone. He steered by his own ideas of justice; hence he was ever at war with things which reason and right had no hand in establishing,—radically wrong in themselves perhaps, or to be changed for the better, but by usage become second nature to society, or at least to that far larger proportion of it which lives by custom alone. He had no value for what the mass of men estimate as desirable; a seat in the senate he declined, though he might have enriched himself by its acceptance. He seemed to commit the mistake of others before him, in dreaming of the perfectibility of man. An anecdote is related of him that, at a ball of fashion where he was a leading character, and the most elegant ladies of the crowd expected the honour of being led out by him, he selected a friendless girl for a partner who was scorned by her companions, having lain under the imputation of an unlucky mishap some time preceding.

The books in which he commonly read were the Greek writers; in the tragedians particularly, he was deeply versed. The Bible was a work of great admiration with him, and his frequent study. For the character of Christ and his doctrines he had great reverence, the axiom of the founder of Christianity being that by which he endeavoured to shape his course in despite of all

obstacles. In pecuniary matters he was liberal. Uncharitable indeed must that man have been who doubted the excellence of his intentions, or charged him with wilful error: who then shall judge a being of whom this may be said, save his Creator—who that lives in the way he sees others live, without regard to the mode being right or wrong, shall charge him with crime, who tries to reconcile together his life and his aspirations after human perfectibility? Shelley had his faults as well as other men, but on the whole it appears that his deviations from the vulgar routine form the great sum of the charges made against him. His religious sentiments were between him and his God.

The writings of Shelley are too deep to be popular, but there is no reader possessing taste and judgment who will not do homage to his pen. He was a poet of great power, he felt intensely, and his works every where display the ethereal spirit of genius of a rare order—abstract, perhaps, but not less powerful; his is the poetry of intellect, not that of the Lakers; his theme is the high one of intellectual nature and lofty feeling, not of waggoners or idiot children. His faults in writing are obvious, but equally so are his beauties. He is too much of a philosopher, and dwells too much upon favourite images, that draw less upon our sympathies than those of social life. His language is lofty, and no one knows better how to cull, arrange, and manage the syllables of his native tongue. He thoroughly understood metrical composition.

Shelley began to publish prematurely, as we have already stated, at the early age of 15; but it was not till about the year 1811 or 1812 that he seems first to have devoted his attention to poetical composition. To enumerate his poetical works here would be a useless task, as they will be found in the collection of his poems appended. His «Prometheus Unbound» is a noble work; his «Cenci» and «Adonais» are his principal works in point of merit. Love was one of his favourite themes, as it is with all poets, and he has ever touched it with a master-hand. The subject of the «Cenci» is badly selected, but it is nobly written, and admirably sustained. Faults it has, but they are amply redeemed by its beauties. It is only from the false clamour raised against him during his life-time, that his poems have not been more read. No scholar, no one having the slightest pretensions to true taste in poetry can be without them. It may be boldly prophesied that they will one day be more read than they have ever yet been, and more understood. In no nation but England do the reading public suffer others to judge for them, and pin their ideas of the defects or beauties of their national writers upon the partial diatribes of hired pens, and the splenetic out-pourings of faction. It is astonishing how the nation of Newton and Locke is thus contented to suffer itself to be deceived and misled by literary Machiavelism.

The following preface to the author's Posthumous Poems contains much to interest the admirers of his genius. The circumstance of its being from the pen of Mrs Shelley will still farther recommend it:—

«It had been my wish, on presenting the public with the Posthumous Poems of Mr Shelley, to have accompanied them by a biographical notice; as it appeared to me, that at this moment a narration of the events of my husband's life would come more gracefully from other hands than mine, I applied to Mr Leigh Hunt. The distinguished friendship that Mr Shelley felt for him, and the enthusiastic affection with which Mr Leigh Hunt clings to his friend's memory, seemed to point him out as the person best calculated for such an undertaking. His absence from this country, which prevented our mutual explanation, has unfortunately rendered my scheme abortive. I do not doubt but that, on some other occasion, he will pay this tribute to his lost friend, and sincerely regret that the volume which I edit has not been honoured by its insertion.

«The comparative solitude in which Mr Shelley lived, was the occasion that he was personally known to few; and his fearless enthusiasm in the cause, which he considered the most sacred upon earth, the improvement of the moral and physical state of mankind, was the chief reason why he, like other illustrious reformers, was pursued by hatred and calumny. No man was ever more devoted than he, to the endeavour of making those around him happy; no man ever possessed friends more unfeignedly attached to him. The ungrateful world did not feel his loss, and the gap it made seemed to close as quickly over his memory as the murderous sea above his living frame. Hereafter men will lament that his transcendent powers of intellect were extinguished before they had bestowed on them their choicest treasures. To his friends his loss is irremediable: the wise, the brave, the gentle, is gone for ever! He is to them as a bright vision, whose radiant track, left behind in the memory, is worth all the realities that society can afford. Before the critics contradict me, let them appeal to any one who had ever known him: to see him was to love him; and his presence, like Ithuriel's spear, was alone sufficient to disclose the falsehood of the tale, which his enemies whispered in the ear of the ignorant world.

«His life was spent in the contemplation of nature, in arduous study, or in acts of kindness

and affection. He was an elegant scholar and a profound metaphysician : without possessing much scientific knowledge, he was unrivalled in the justness and extent of his observations on natural objects; he knew every plant by its name, and was familiar with the history and habits of every production of the earth; he could interpret without a fault each appearance in the sky, and the varied phænomena of heaven and earth filled him with deep emotion. He made his study and reading-room of the shadowed copse, the stream, the lake and the water-fall. Ill health and continual pain preyed upon his powers; and the solitude in which we lived, particularly on our first arrival in Italy, although congenial to his feelings, must frequently have weighed upon his spirits : those beautiful and affecting 'Lines, written in dejection at Naples,' were composed at such an interval; but when in health, his spirits were buoyant and youthful to an extraordinary degree.

« Such was his love for nature, that every page of his poetry is associated in the minds of his friends with the loveliest scenes of the countries which he inhabited. In early life he visited the most beautiful parts of this country and Ireland. Afterwards the Alps of Switzerland became his inspirers. 'Prometheus Unbound' was written among the deserted and flower-grown ruins of Rome; and when he made his home under the Pisan hills, their roofless recesses harboured him as he composed 'The Witch of Atlas,' 'Adonais,' and 'Hellas.' In the wild but beautiful Bay of Spezia, the winds and waves which he loved became his playmates. His days were chiefly spent on the water; the management of his boat, its alterations and improvements, were his principal occupation. At night, when the unclouded moon shone on the calm sea, he often went alone in his little shallop to the rocky caves that bordered it, and sitting beneath their shelter wrote 'The Triumph of Life,' the last of his productions. The beauty but strangeness of this lonely place, the refined pleasure which he felt in the companionship of a few selected friends, our entire sequestration from the rest of the world, all contributed to render this period of his life one of continued enjoyment. I am convinced that the two months we passed there were the happiest he had ever known : his health even rapidly improved, and he was never better than when I last saw him, full of spirits and joy, embark for Leghorn, that he might there welcome Leigh Hunt to Italy. I was to have accompanied him, but illness confined me to my room, and thus put the seal on my misfortune. His vessel bore out of sight with a favourable wind, and I remained awaiting his return by the breakers of that sea which was about to engulf him.

« He spent a week at Pisa, employed in kind offices towards his friend, and enjoying with keen delight the renewal of their intercourse. He then embarked with Mr Williams, the chosen and beloved sharer of his pleasures and of his fate, to return to us. We waited for them in vain; the sea by its restless moaning seemed to desire to inform us of what we would not learn :——but a veil may well be drawn over such misery. The real anguish of these moments transcended all the fictions that the most glowing imagination ever pourtrayed : our seclusion, the savage nature of the inhabitants of the surrounding villages, and our immediate vicinity to the troubled sea, combined to embue with strange horror our days of uncertainty. The truth was at last known,—a truth that made our loved and lovely Italy appear a tomb, its sky a pall. Every heart echoed the deep lament; and my only consolation was in the praise and earnest love that each voice bestowed and each countenance demonstrated for him we had lost,—not, I fondly hope, for ever : his unearthly and elevated nature is a pledge of the continuation of his being, although in an altered form. Rome received his ashes; they are deposited beneath its weed-grown wall, and 'the world's sole monument' is enriched by his remains.

« 'Julian and Maddalo,' 'The Witch of Atlas,' and most of the Translations, were written some years ago, and, with the exception of 'The Cyclops,' and the Scenes from the 'Magico Prodigioso,' may be considered as having received the author's ultimate corrections. 'The Triumph of Life' was his last work, and was left in so unfinished a state, that I arranged it in its present form with great difficulty. Many of the Miscellaneous Poems, written on the spur of the occasion, and never retouched, I found among his manuscript books, and have carefully copied : I have subjoined, whenever I have been able, the date of their composition.

« I do not know whether the critics will reprehend the insertion of some of the most imperfect among these; but I frankly own, that I have been more actuated by the fear lest any monument of his genius should escape me, than the wish of presenting nothing but what was complete to the fastidious reader. I feel secure that the Lovers of Shelley's Poetry (who know how more than any other poet of the present day every line and word he wrote is instinct with peculiar beauty) will pardon and thank me : I consecrate this volume to them.

« Mary W. Shelley.

« *London, June 1st*, 1824.»

THE

POETICAL WORKS

OF

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY.

The Revolt of Islam;

A POEM.

IN TWELVE CANTOS.

PREFACE.

The Poem which I now present to the world, is an attempt from which I scarcely dare to expect success, and in which a writer of established fame might fail without disgrace. It is an experiment on the temper of the public mind, as to how far a thirst for a happier condition of moral and political society survives, among the enlightened and refined, the tempests which have shaken the age in which we live. I have sought to enlist the harmony of metrical language, the etherial combinations of the fancy, the rapid and subtle transitions of human passion, all those elements which essentially compose a Poem, in the cause of a liberal and comprehensive morality; and in the view of kindling within the bosoms of my readers, a virtuous enthusiasm for those doctrines of liberty and justice, that faith and hope in something good, which neither violence, nor misrepresentation, nor prejudice, can ever totally extinguish among mankind.

For this purpose I have chosen a story of human passion in its most universal character, diversified with moving and romantic adventures, and appealing, in contempt of all artificial opinions or institutions, to the common sympathies of every human breast. I have made no attempt to recommend the motives which I would substitute for those at present governing mankind by methodical and systematic argument. I would only awaken the feelings so that the reader should see the beauty of true virtue, and be incited to those inquiries which have led to my moral and political creed, and that of some of the sublimest intellects in the world. The Poem therefore (with the exception of the first Canto, which is purely introductory), is narrative, not didactic. It is a succession of pictures illustrating the growth and progress of individual mind aspiring after excellence, and devoted to the love of mankind; its influence in refining and making pure the most daring and uncommon impulses of the imagination, the understanding, and the senses; its impatience at "all the oppressions which are done under the sun;" its tendency to awaken public hope and to enlighten and improve mankind; the rapid effects of the application of that tendency; the awakening of an immense nation from their slavery and degradation to a true sense of moral dignity and freedom; the bloodless dethronement of their oppressors, and the unveiling of the religious frauds by which they had been deluded into submission; the tranquillity of successful patriotism, and the universal toleration and benevolence of true philanthropy; the treachery and barbarity of hired soldiers; vice not the object of punishment and hatred, but kindness and pity; the faithlessness of tyrants; the confederacy of the Rulers of the World, and the restoration of the expelled Dynasty by foreign arms; the massacre and extermination of the Patriots, and the victory of established power; the consequences of legitimate despotism, civil war, famine, plague, superstition, and an utter extinction of the domestic affections; the judicial murder of the advocates of Liberty; the temporary triumph of oppression, that secure earnest of its final and inevitable fall; the transient nature of ignorance and error, and the eternity of genius and virtue. Such is the series of delineations of which the Poem consists. And if the lofty passions with which it has been my scope to distinguish this story, shall not excite in the reader a generous impulse, an ardent thirst for excellence, an interest profound and strong, such as belongs to no meaner desires—let not the failure be imputed to a natural unfitness for human sympathy in these sublime and animating themes. It is the business of the poet to communicate to others the pleasure and the enthusiasm arising out of those images and feelings, in the vivid presence of which within his own mind, consists at once his inspiration and his reward.

The panic which, like an epidemic transport, seized upon all classes of men during the excesses consequent upon the French Revolution, is gradually giving place to sanity. It has ceased to be believed, that whole generations of mankind ought to consign themselves to a hopeless inheritance of ignorance and misery, because a nation of men who had been dupes and slaves for centuries, were incapable of conducting themselves with the wisdom and tranquillity of freemen so soon as some of their fetters were partially loosened. That their con-

duct could not have been marked by any other characters than ferocity and thoughtlessness, is the historical fact from which liberty derives all its recommendations, and falsehood the worst features of its deformity. There is a reflux in the tide of human things which bears the shipwrecked hopes of men into a secure haven, after the storms are past. Methinks, those who now live have survived an age of despair.

The French Revolution may be considered as one of those manifestations of a general state of feeling among civilized mankind, produced by a defect of correspondence between the knowledge existing in society and the improvement, or gradual abolition of political institutions. The year 1788 may be assumed as the epoch of one of the most important crises produced by this feeling. The sympathies connected with that event extended to every bosom. The most generous and amiable natures were those which participated the most extensively in these sympathies. But such a degree of unmingled good was expected, as it was impossible to realize. If the Revolution had been in every respect prosperous, then misrule and superstition would lose half their claims to our abhorrence, as fetters which the captive can unlock with the slightest motion of his fingers, and which do not eat with poisonous rust into the soul. The revulsion occasioned by the atrocities of the demagogues and the re-establishment of successive tyrannies in France was terrible, and felt in the remotest corner of the civilized world. Could they listen to the plea of reason who had groaned under the calamities of a social state, according to the provisions of which, one man riots in luxury whilst another famishes for want of bread? Can he who the day before was a trampled slave, suddenly become liberal-minded, forbearing, and independent? This is the consequence of the habits of a state of society to be produced by resolute perseverance and indefatigable hope, and long-suffering and long-believing courage, and the systematic efforts of generations of men of intellect and virtue. Such is the lesson which experience teaches now. But on the first reverses of hope in the progress of French liberty, the sanguine eagerness for good overleapt the solution of these questions, and for a time extinguished itself in the unexpectedness of their result. Thus many of the most ardent and tender-hearted of the worshippers of public good, have been morally ruined by what a partial glimpse of the events they deplored, appeared to show as the melancholy desolation of all their cherished hopes. Hence gloom and misanthropy have become the characteristics of the age in which we live, the solace of a disappointment that unconsciously finds relief only in the wilful exaggeration of its own despair. This influence has tainted the literature of the age with the hopelessness of the minds from which it flows. Metaphysics,[1] and inquiries into moral and political science, have become little else than vain attempts to revive exploded superstitions, or sophisms like those [2] of Mr Malthus, calculated to lull the oppressors of mankind into a security of everlasting triumph. Our works of fiction and poetry have been overshadowed by the same infectious gloom. But mankind appear to me to be emerging from their trance. I am aware, methinks, of a slow, gradual, silent change. In that belief I have composed the following Poem.

I do not presume to enter into competition with our greatest contemporary Poets. Yet I am unwilling to tread in the footsteps of any who have preceded me. I have sought to avoid the imitation of any style of language or versification peculiar to the original minds of which it is the character, designing that even if what I have produced be worthless, it should still be properly my own. Nor have I permitted any system relating to mere words, to divert the attention of the reader from whatever interest I may have succeeded in creating, to my own ingenuity in contriving to disgust them according to the rules of criticism. I have simply clothed my thoughts in what appeared to me the most obvious and appropriate language. A person familiar with nature, and with the most celebrated productions of the human mind, can scarcely err in following the instinct, with respect to selection of language, produced by that familiarity.

There is an education peculiarly fitted for a Poet, without which, genius and sensibility can hardly fill the circle of their capacities. No education indeed can entitle to this appellation a dull and unobservant mind, or one, though neither dull nor unobservant, in which the channels of communication between thought and expression have been obstructed or closed. How far it is my fortune to belong to either of the latter classes, I cannot know. I aspire to be something better. The circumstances of my accidental education have been favourable to this ambition. I have been familiar from boyhood with mountains and lakes, and the sea, and the solitude of forests: Danger which sports upon the brink of precipices, has been my playmate. I have trodden the glaciers of the Alps, and lived under the eye of Mont Blanc. I have been a wanderer among distant fields. I have sailed down mighty rivers, and seen the sun rise and set, and the stars come forth, whilst I have sailed night and day down a rapid stream among mountains. I have seen populous cities, and have watched the passions which rise and spread, and sink and change amongst assembled multitudes of men. I have seen the theatre of the more visible ravages of tyranny and war, cities and villages reduced to scattered groups of black and roofless houses, and the naked inhabitants sitting famished upon their desolated thresholds. I have conversed with living men of genius. The poetry of ancient Greece and Rome, and modern Italy, and our own country, has been to me like external nature, a passion and an enjoyment. Such are the sources from which the materials for the imagery of my Poem have been drawn. I have considered Poetry in its most comprehensive sense, and have read the Poets and the Historians, and the Metaphysicians[1] whose writings have been accessible to me, and have looked upon the beautiful and majestic scenery of the earth as common sources of those elements which it is the province of the Poet to embody and combine. Yet the experience and the feelings to which I refer, do not in themselves constitute men

[1] I ought to except Sir W. Drummond's « Academical Questions; » a volume of very acute and powerful metaphysical criticism.

[2] It is remarkable, as a symptom of the revival of public hope, that Mr Malthus has assigned, in the later editions of his work, an indefinite dominion to moral restraint over the principle of population. This concession answers all the inferences from his doctrine unfavourable to human improvement, and reduces the « Essay on Population » to a commentary illustrative of the unanswerableness of « Political Justice. »

[1] In this sense there may be such a thing as perfectibility in works of fiction, notwithstanding the concession often made by the advocates of human improvement, that perfectibility is a term applicable only to science.

Poets, but only prepares them to be the auditors of those who are. How far I shall be found to possess that more essential attribute of Poetry, the power of awakening in others sensations like those which animate my own bosom, is that which, to speak sincerely, I know not; and which, with an acquiescent and contented spirit, I expect to be taught by the effect which I shall produce upon those whom I now address.

I have avoided, as I have said before, the imitation of any contemporary style. But there must be a resemblance which does not depend upon their own will, between all the writers of any particular age. They cannot escape from subjection to a common influence which arises out of an infinite combination of circumstances belonging to the times in which they live, though each is in a degree the author of the very influence by which his being is thus pervaded. Thus, the tragic Poets of the age of Pericles; the Italian revivers of ancient learning; those mighty intellects of our own country that succeeded the Reformation, the translators of the Bible, Shakspeare, Spenser, the Dramatists of the reign of Elizabeth, and Lord Bacon;[1] the colder spirits of the interval that succeeded;—all, resemble each other, and differ from every other in their several classes. In this view of things, Ford can no more be called the imitator of Shakspeare, than Shakspeare the imitator of Ford. There were perhaps few other points of resemblance between these two men, than that which the universal and inevitable influence of their age produced. And this is an influence which neither the meanest scribbler, nor the sublimest genius of any æra can escape; and which I have not attempted to escape.

I have adopted the stanza of Spenser (a measure inexpressibly beautiful), not because I consider it a finer model of poetical harmony than the blank verse of Shakspeare and Milton, but because in the latter there is no shelter for mediocrity: you must either succeed or fail. This perhaps an aspiring spirit should desire. But I was enticed, also, by the brilliancy and magnificence of sound which a mind that has been nourished upon musical thoughts, can produce by a just and harmonious arrangement of the pauses of this measure. Yet there will be found some instances where I have completely failed in this attempt, and one, which I here request the reader to consider as an erratum, where there is left most inadvertently an alexandrine in the middle of a stanza.

But in this, as in every other respect, I have written fearlessly. It is the misfortune of this age, that its Writers, too thoughtless of immortality, are exquisitely sensible to temporary praise or blame. They write with the fear of Reviews before their eyes. This system of criticism sprang up in that torpid interval when Poetry was not. Poetry, and the art which professes to regulate and limit its powers, cannot subsist together. Longinus could not have been the contemporary of Homer, nor Boileau of Horace. Yet this species of criticism never presumed to assert an understanding of its own: it has always, unlike true science, followed, not preceded the opinion of mankind, and would even now bribe with worthless adulation some of our greatest Poets to impose gratuitous fetters on their own imaginations, and become unconscious accomplices in the daily murder of all genius either not so aspiring or not so fortunate as their own. I have sought therefore to write, as I believe that Homer, Shakspeare, and Milton wrote, with an utter disregard of anonymous censure. I am certain that calumny and misrepresentation, though it may move me to compassion, cannot disturb my peace. I shall understand the expressive silence of those sagacious enemies who dare not trust themselves to speak. I shall endeavour to extract from the midst of insult, and contempt, and maledictions, those admonitions which may tend to correct whatever imperfections such censurers may discover in this my first serious appeal to the Public. If certain Critics were as clear-sighted as they are malignant, how great would be the benefit to be derived from their virulent writings! As it is, I fear I shall be malicious enough to be amused with their paltry tricks and lame invectives. Should the Public judge that my composition is worthless, I shall indeed bow before the tribunal from which Milton received his crown of immortality, and shall seek to gather, if I live, strength from that defeat, which may nerve me to some new enterprise of thought which may *not* be worthless. I cannot conceive that Lucretius, when he meditated that poem whose doctrines are yet the bases of our metaphysical knowledge, and whose eloquence has been the wonder of mankind, wrote in awe of such censure as the hired sophists of the impure and superstitious noblemen of Rome might affix to what he should produce. It was at the period when Greece was led captive, and Asia made tributary to the Republic, fast verging itself to slavery and ruin, that a multitude of Syrian captives, bigotted to the worship of their obscene Ashtaroth, and the unworthy successors of Socrates and Zeno, found there a precarious subsistence by administering, under the name of freedmen, to the vices and vanities of the great. These wretched men were skilled to plead, with a superficial but plausible set of sophisms, in favour of that contempt for virtue which is the portion of slaves, and that faith in portents, the most fatal substitute for benevolence in the imaginations of men, which arising from the enslaved communities of the East, then first began to overwhelm the western nations in its stream. Were these the kind of men whose disapprobation the wise and lofty-minded Lucretius should have regarded with a salutary awe? The latest and perhaps the meanest of those who follow in his footsteps, would disdain to hold life on such conditions.

The Poem now presented to the Public occupied little more than six months in the composition. That period has been devoted to the task with unremitting ardour and enthusiasm. I have exercised a watchful and earnest criticism on my work as it grew under my hands. I would willingly have sent it forth to the world with that perfection which long labour and revision is said to bestow. But I found that if I should gain something in exactness by this method, I might lose much of the newness and energy of imagery and language as it flowed fresh from my mind. And although the mere composition occupied no more than six months, the thoughts thus arranged were slowly gathered in as many years.

I trust that the reader will carefully distinguish between those opinions which have a dramatic propriety in reference to the characters which they are designed to elucidate, and such as are properly my own. The erroneous and degrading idea which men have conceived of a Supreme Being, for instance, is spoken against, but

[1] Milton stands alone in the age which he illumined.

not the Supreme Being itself. The belief which some superstitious persons whom I have brought upon the stage entertain of the Deity, as injurious to the character of his benevolence, is widely different from my own. In recommending also a great and important change in the spirit which animates the social institutions of mankind, I have avoided all flattery to those violent and malignant passions of our nature, which are ever on the watch to mingle with and to alloy the most beneficial innovations. There is no quarter given to Revenge, or Envy, or Prejudice. Love is celebrated every where as the sole law which should govern the moral world.

DEDICATION.

There is no danger to a man, that knows
What life and death is: there 's not any law
Exceeds his knowledge; neither is it lawful
That he should stoop to any other law.
CHAPMAN.

TO MARY ——— ———.

1.

So now my summer-task is ended, Mary,
And I return to thee, mine own heart's home;
As to his Queen some victor Knight of Faery,
Earning bright spoils for her enchanted dome;
Nor thou disdain, that ere my fame become
A star among the stars of mortal night,
If it indeed may cleave its natal gloom,
Its doubtful promise thus I would unite
With thy beloved name, thou Child of love and light.

2.

The toil which stole from thee so many an hour,
Is ended,—and the fruit is at thy feet!
No longer where the woods to frame a bower
With interlaced branches mix and meet,
Or where with sound like many voices sweet,
Water-falls leap among wild islands green,
Which framed for my lone boat a lone retreat
Of moss-grown trees and weeds, shall I be seen:
But beside thee, where still my heart has ever been.

3.

Thoughts of great deeds were mine, dear Friend, when first
The clouds which wrap this world from youth did pass.
I do remember well the hour which burst
My spirit's sleep: a fresh May-dawn it was,
When I walked forth upon the glittering grass,
And wept, I knew not why; until there rose
From the near school-room, voices, that, alas!
Were but one echo from a world of woes—
The harsh and grating strife of tyrants and of foes.

4.

And then I clasp'd my hands and look'd around—
—But none was near to mock my streaming eyes,
Which pour'd their warm drops on the sunny ground—
So without shame, I spake:—«I will be wise,
And just, and free, and mild, if in me lies
Such power, for I grow weary to behold
The selfish and the strong still tyrannise
Without reproach or check.» I then controll'd
My tears, my heart grew calm, and I was meek and bold.

5.

And from that hour did I with earnest thought
Heap knowledge from forbidden mines of lore,
Yet nothing that my tyrants knew or taught
I cared to learn, but from that secret store
Wrought linked armour for my soul, before
It might walk forth to war among mankind;
Thus power and hope were strengthen'd more and more
Within me, till there came upon my mind
A sense of loneliness, a thirst with which I pined.

6.

Alas, that love should be a blight and snare
To those who seek all sympathies in one!—
Such once I sought in vain; then black despair,
The shadow of a starless night, was thrown
Over the world in which I moved alone:—
Yet never found I one not false to me,
Hard hearts, and cold, like weights of icy stone
Which crushed and withered mine, that could not be
Aught but a lifeless clog, until revived by thee.

7.

Thou Friend, whose presence on my wintry heart
Fell, like bright Spring upon some herbless plain;
How beautiful and calm and free thou wert
In thy young wisdom, when the mortal chain
Of Custom thou didst burst and rend in twain,
And walked as free as light the clouds among,
Which many an envious slave then breathed in vain
From his dim dungeon, and my spirit sprung
To meet thee from the woes which had begirt it long.

8.

No more alone through the world's wilderness,
Although I trod the paths of high intent,
I journey'd now: no more companionless,
Where solitude is like despair, I went.—
There is the wisdom of a stern content
When Poverty can blight the just and good,
When Infamy dares mock the innocent,
And cherish'd friends turn with the multitude
To trample: this was ours, and we unshaken stood!

9.

Now has descended a serener hour,
And with inconstant fortune, friends return;
Though suffering leaves the knowledge and the power
Which says:—Let scorn be not repaid with scorn.
And from thy side two gentle babes are born
To fill our home with smiles, and thus are we
Most fortunate beneath life's beaming morn;
And these delights, and thou have been to me
The parents of the Song I consecrate to thee.

10.

Is it, that now my inexperienced fingers
But strike the prelude of a loftier strain?
Or, must the lyre on which my spirit lingers
Soon pause in silence, ne'er to sound again,
Though it might shake the Anarch Custom's reign,
And charm the minds of men to Truth's own sway
Holier than was Amphion's? I would fain
Reply in hope—but I am worn away,
And Death and Love are yet contending for their prey.

11.

And what art thou? I know, but dare not speak:
Time may interpret to his silent years.
Yet in the paleness of thy thoughtful cheek,
And in the light thine ample forehead wears,
And in thy sweetest smiles, and in thy tears,
And in thy gentle speech, a prophecy
Is whispered, to subdue my fondest fears:
And through thine eyes, even in thy soul I see
A lamp of vestal fire burning internally.

12.

They say that thou wert lovely from thy birth,
Of glorious parents, thou aspiring Child.
I wonder not—for One then left this earth
Whose life was like a setting planet mild,
Which clothed thee in the radiance undefiled
Of its departing glory; still her fame
Shines on thee, through the tempests dark and wild
Which shake these latter days; and thou canst claim
The shelter, from thy Sire, of an immortal name.

13.

One voice came forth from many a mighty spirit,
Which was the echo of three thousand years;
And the tumultuous world stood mute to hear it,
As some lone man who in a desert hears
The music of his home:—unwonted fears
Fell on the pale oppressors of our race,
And Faith, and Custom, and low-thoughted cares,
Like thunder-stricken dragons, for a space
Left the torn human heart, their food and dwelling-place.

14.

Truth's deathless voice pauses among mankind!
If there must be no response to my cry—
If men must rise and stamp with fury blind
On his pure name who loves them,—thou and I,
Sweet friend! can look from our tranquillity
Like lamps into the world's tempestuous night,—
Two tranquil stars, while clouds are passing by
Which wrap them from the foundering seaman's sight,
That burn from year to year with unextinguish'd light.

CANTO I.

I.

When the last hope of trampled France had fail'd
Like a brief dream of unremaining glory,
From visions of despair I rose, and scaled
The peak of an aerial promontory,
Whose cavern'd base with the vext surge was hoary;
And saw the golden dawn break forth, and waken
Each cloud, and every wave:—but transitory
The calm: for sudden, the firm earth was shaken,
As if by the last wreck its frame were overtaken.

II.

So, as I stood, one blast of muttering thunder
Burst in far peals along the waveless deep,
When, gathering fast, around, above and under,
Long trains of tremulous mist began to creep,
Until their complicating lines did steep
The orient sun in shadow:—not a sound
Was heard; one horrible repose did keep
The forests and the floods, and all around
Darkness more dread than night was poured upon the ground.

III.

Hark! 't is the rushing of a wind that sweeps
Earth and the ocean. See! the lightnings yawn
Deluging Heaven with fire, and the lash'd deeps
Glitter and boil beneath: it rages on,
One mighty stream, whirlwind and waves upthrown,
Lightning, and hail, and darkness eddying by.
There is a pause—the sea-birds, that were gone
Into their caves to shriek, come forth, to spy
What calm has fall'n on earth, what light is in the sky.

IV.

For, where the irresistible storm had cloven
That fearful darkness, the blue sky was seen
Fretted with many a fair cloud interwoven
Most delicately, and the ocean green,
Beneath that opening spot of blue serene,
Quiver'd like burning emerald: calm was spread
On all below; but far on high, between
Earth and the upper air, the vast clouds fled,
Countless and swift as leaves on autumn's tempest shed.

V.

For ever, as the war became more fierce
Between the whirlwinds and the rack on high,
That spot grew more serene; blue light did pierce
The woof of those white clouds, which seem'd to lie
Far, deep, and motionless; while through the sky
The pallid semicircle of the moon
Past on, in slow and moving majesty;
Its upper horn array'd in mists, which soon
But slowly fled, like dew beneath the beams of noon.

VI.

I could not chuse but gaze; a fascination
Dwelt in that moon, and sky, and clouds, which drew
My fancy thither, and in expectation
Of what I knew not, I remain'd:—the hue
Of the white moon, amid that heaven so blue,
Suddenly stain'd with shadow did appear;
A speck, a cloud, a shape, approaching grew,
Like a great ship in the sun's sinking sphere
Beheld afar at sea, and swift it came anear.

VII.

Even like a bark, which from a chasm of mountains,
Dark, vast, and overhanging, on a river
Which there collects the strength of all its fountains,
Comes forth, whilst with the speed its frame doth quiver,
Sails, oars, and stream, tending to one endeavour;
So, from that chasm of light a winged Form
On all the winds of heaven approaching ever
Floated, dilating as it came: the storm
Pursued it with fierce blasts, and lightnings swift and warm.

VIII.

A course precipitous, of dizzy speed,
Suspending thought and breath; a monstrous sight!
For in the air do I behold indeed
An Eagle and a Serpent wreathed in fight:—
And now relaxing its impetuous flight,
Before the aerial rock on which I stood,
The Eagle, hovering, wheel'd to left and right,
And hung with lingering wings over the flood,
And startled with its yells the wide air's solitude.

IX.

A shaft of light upon its wings descended,
And every golden feather gleamed therein—
Feather and scale inextricably blended.
The Serpent's mailed and many-colour'd skin
Shone through the plumes its coils were twined within
By many a swollen and knotted fold, and high
And far, the neck receding lithe and thin,
Sustain'd a crested head, which warily
Shifted and glanced before the Eagle's stedfast eye.

X.

Around, around, in ceaseless circles wheeling
With clang of wings and scream, the Eagle sail'd
Incessantly—sometimes on high concealing
Its lessening orbs, sometimes as if it fail'd,
Drooped through the air; and still it shriek'd and wail'd,
And casting back its eager head, with beak
And talon unremittingly assail'd
The wreathed Serpent, who did ever seek
Upon his enemy's heart a mortal wound to wreak.

XI.

What life, what power, was kindled and arose
Within the sphere of that appalling fray!
For, from the encounter of those wond'rous foes,
A vapour like the sea's suspended spray
Hung gather'd: in the void air, far away,
Floated the shatter'd plumes; bright scales did leap,
Where'er the Eagle's talons made their way,
Like sparks into the darkness;—as they sweep,
Blood stains the snowy foam of the tumultuous deep.

XII.

Swift chances in that combat—many a check,
And many a change, a dark and wild turmoil;
Sometimes the Snake around his enemy's neck
Lock'd in stiff rings his adamantine coil,
Until the Eagle, faint with pain and toil,
Remitted his strong flight, and near the sea
Languidly flutter'd, hopeless so to foil
His adversary, who then rear'd on high
His red and burning crest, radiant with victory.

XIII.

Then on the white edge of the bursting surge,
Where they had sank together, would the Snake
Relax his suffocating grasp, and scourge
The wind with his wild writhings; for to break
That chain of torment, the vast bird would shake
The strength of his unconquerable wings
As in despair, and with his sinewy neck,
Dissolve in sudden shock those linked rings,
Then soar—as swift as smoke from a volcano springs.

XIV.

Wile baffled wile, and strength encounter'd strength,
Thus long, but unprevailing:—the event
Of that portentous fight appear'd at length:
Until the lamp of day was almost spent
It had endured, when lifeless, stark, and rent,
Hung high that mighty Serpent, and at last
Fell to the sea, while o'er the continent,
With clang of wings and scream the Eagle past,
Heavily borne away on the exhausted blast.

XV.

And with it fled the tempest, so that ocean
And earth and sky shone through the atmosphere—
Only, 't was strange to see the red commotion
Of waves like mountains o'er the sinking sphere
Of sun-set sweep, and their fierce roar to hear
Amid the calm: down the steep path I wound
To the sea-shore—the evening was most clear
And beautiful, and there the sea I found
Calm as a cradled child in dreamless slumber bound.

XVI.

There was a Woman, beautiful as morning,
Sitting beneath the rocks, upon the sand
Of the waste sea—fair as one flower adorning
An icy wilderness—each delicate hand
Lay crossed upon her bosom, and the band
Of her dark hair had fall'n, and so she sate
Looking upon the waves; on the bare strand
Upon the sea-mark a small boat did wait,
Fair as herself, like Love by Hope left desolate.

XVII.

It seem'd that this fair Shape had look'd upon
That unimaginable fight, and now
That her sweet eyes were weary of the sun,
As brightly it illustrated her woe;
For in the tears which silently to flow
Paused not, its lustre hung: she watching aye
The foam-wreaths which the faint tide wove below
Upon the spangled sands, groaned heavily,
And after every groan looked up over the sea.

XVIII.

And when she saw the wounded Serpent make
His path between the waves, her lips grew pale,
Parted, and quiver'd; the tears ceased to break
From her immoveable eyes; no voice of wail
Escaped her; but she rose, and on the gale
Loosening her star-bright robe and shadowy hair
Pour'd forth her voice; the caverns of the vale
That open'd to the ocean, caught it there,
And fill'd with silver sounds the overflowing air.

XIX.

She spake in language whose strange melody
Might not belong to earth. I heard, alone,
What made its music more melodious be,
The pity and the love of every tone;
But to the Snake those accents sweet were known
His native tongue and hers; nor did he beat
The hoar spray idly then, but winding on
Through the green shadows of the waves that meet
Near to the shore, did pause beside her snowy feet.

XX.

Then on the sands the Woman sate again,
And wept and clasp'd her hands, and all between,
Renew'd the unintelligible strain
Of her melodious voice and eloquent mien;
And she unveil'd her bosom, and the green
And glancing shadows of the sea did play
O'er its marmoreal depth:—one moment seen,
For ere the next, the Serpent did obey
Her voice, and, coil'd in rest in her embrace it lay.

XXI.

Then she arose, and smiled on me with eyes
Serene yet sorrowing, like that planet fair,
While yet the day-light lingereth in the skies
Which cleaves with arrowy beams the dark-red air,
And said: To grieve is wise, but the despair
Was weak and vain which led thee here from sleep:
This shalt thou know, and more, if thou dost dare
With me and with this Serpent, o'er the deep,
A voyage divine and strange, companionship to keep.

XXII.

Her voice was like the wildest, saddest tone,
Yet sweet, of some loved voice heard long ago.
I wept. Shall this fair woman all alone
Over the sea with that fierce Serpent go?
His head is on her heart, and who can know
How soon he may devour his feeble prey?—
Such were my thoughts, when the tide 'gan to flow;
And that strange boat, like the moon's shade did sway
Amid reflected stars that in the waters lay.

XXIII.

A boat of rare device, which had no sail
But its own curved prow of thin moonstone,
Wrought like a web of texture fine and frail,
To catch those gentlest winds which are not known
To breathe, but by the steady speed alone
With which it cleaves the sparkling sea; and now
We are embark'd, the mountains hang and frown
Over the starry deep that gleams below
A vast and dim expanse, as o'er the waves we go.

XXIV.

And as we sail'd, a strange and awful tale
That Woman told, like such mysterious dream
As makes the slumberer's cheek with wonder pale!
'T was midnight, and around, a shoreless stream,
Wide ocean roll'd, when that majestic theme
Shrined in her heart found utterance, and she bent
Her looks on mine; those eyes a kindling beam
Of love divine into my spirit sent,
And ere her lips could move, made the air eloquent.

XXV

Speak not to me, but hear! much shalt thou learn,
Much must remain unthought, and more untold,
In the dark Future's ever-flowing urn:
Know then, that from the depth of ages old
Two Powers o'er mortal things dominion hold
Ruling the world with a divided lot,
Immortal, all pervading, manifold,
Twin Genii, equal Gods—when life and thought
Sprang forth, they burst the womb of inessential Nought.

XXVI.

The earliest dweller of the world alone,
Stood on the verge of chaos: Lo! afar
O'er the wide wild abyss two meteors shone,
Sprung from the depth of its tempestuous jar:
A blood-red Comet and the Morning Star
Mingling their beams in combat—as he stood,
All thoughts within his mind waged mutual war,
In dreadful sympathy—when to the flood
That fair Star fell, he turn'd and shed his brother's blood.

XXVII.

Thus evil triumph'd, and the Spirit of evil,
One Power of many shapes which none may know,
One Shape of many names; the Fiend did revel
In victory, reigning o'er a world of woe,
For the new race of man went to and fro,
Famish'd and homeless, loathed and loathing, wild,
And hating good—for his immortal foe,
He changed from starry shape, beauteous and mild,
To a dire Snake, with man and beast unreconciled.

XXVIII.

The darkness lingering o'er the dawn of things,
Was Evil's breath and life: this made him strong
To soar aloft with overshadowing wings;
And the great Spirit of Good did creep among
The nations of mankind, and every tongue
Cursed, and blasphemed him as he past; for none
Knew good from evil, though their names were hung
In mockery o'er the fane where many a groan,
As King, and Lord, and God, the conquering Fiend did own.

XXIX.

The fiend, whose name was Legion; Death, Decay,
Earthquake and Blight, and Want, and Madness pale,
Winged and wan diseases, an array
Numerous as leaves that strew the autumnal gale;
Poison, a snake in flowers, beneath the veil
Of food and mirth, hiding his mortal head;
And, without whom all these might nought avail,
Fear, Hatred, Faith, and Tyranny, who spread
Those subtle nets which snare the living and the dead.

XXX.

His spirit is their power, and they his slaves
In air, and light, and thought, and language dwell;
And keep their state from palaces to graves,
In all resorts of men—invisible,
But when, in ebon mirror, Nightmare fell
To Tyrant or impostor bids them rise,
Black winged demon forms—whom, from the hell,
His reign and dwelling beneath nether skies,
He loosens to their dark and blasting ministries.

XXXI.

In the world's youth his empire was as firm
As its foundations—soon the Spirit of Good,
Though in the likeness of a loathsome worm,
Sprang from the billows of the formless flood,
Which shrank and fled; and with that fiend of blood
Renew'd the doubtful war—thrones then first shook,
And earth's immense and trampled multitude,
In hope on their own powers began to look,
And Fear, the demon pale, his sanguine shrine forsook.

XXXII.

Then Greece arose, and to its bards and sages,
In dream, the golden pinioned Genii came,
Even where they slept amid the night of ages,
Steeping their hearts in the divinest flame,
Which thy breath kindled, Power of holiest name!
And oft in cycles since, when darkness gave
New weapons to thy foe, their sunlike fame
Upon the combat shone—a light to save,
Like Paradise spread forth beyond the shadowy grave.

XXXIII.

Such is this conflict—when mankind doth strive
With its oppressors in a strife of blood,
Or when free thoughts, like lightnings are alive;
And in each bosom of the multitude
Justice and truth, with custom's hydra brood,
Wage silent war;—when priests and kings dissemble
In smiles or frowns their fierce disquietude,
When round pure hearts, a host of hopes assemble,
The Snake and Eagle meet—the world's foundations tremble!

XXXIV.

Thou hast beheld that fight—when to thy home
Thou didst return, steep not its hearth in tears;
Though thou mayst hear that earth is now become
The tyrant's garbage, which to his compeers,
The vile reward of their dishonour'd years,
He will dividing give.—The victor Fiend
Omnipotent of yore, now quails, and fears
His triumph dearly won, which soon will lend
An impulse swift and sure to his approaching end.

XXXV.

List, stranger list! mine is a human form,
Like that thou wearest—touch me—shriek not now!
My hand thou feel'st is not a ghost's, but warm
With human blood.—'T was many years ago,
Since first my thirsting soul aspired to know
The secrets of this wondrous world, when deep
My heart was pierced with sympathy, for woe
Which could not be mine own—and thought did keep
In dream, unnatural watch beside an infant's sleep.

XXXVI.

Woe could not be mine own, since far from men
I dwelt, a free and happy orphan child,
By the sea-shore, in a deep mountain glen;
And near the waves, and through the forests wild,
I roam'd, to storm and darkness reconciled:
For I was calm while tempest shook the sky:
But when the breathless heavens in beauty smiled,
I wept, sweet tears, yet too tumultuously
For peace, and clasp'd my hands aloft in ecstacy.

XXXVII.

These were forebodings of my fate—before
A woman's heart beat in my virgin breast,
It had been nurtured in divinest lore:
A dying poet gave me books, and blest
With wild but holy talk the sweet unrest
In which I watch'd him as he died away—
A youth with hoary hair—a fleeting guest
Of our lone mountains—and this lore did sway
My spirit like a storm, contending there alway.

XXXVIII.

Thus the dark tale which history doth unfold,
I knew, but not, methinks, as others know,
For they weep not; and Wisdom had unroll'd
The clouds which hide the gulf of mortal woe:
To few can she that warning vision show,
For I loved all things with intense devotion;
So that when Hope's deep source in fullest flow,
Like earthquake did uplift the stagnant ocean
Of human thoughts—mine shook beneath the wide emotion.

XXXIX.

When first the living blood through all these veins
Kindled a thought in sense, great France sprang forth,
And seized, as if to break, the ponderous chains
Which bind in woe the nations of the earth.
I saw, and started from my cottage hearth;
And to the clouds and waves in tameless gladness,
Shriek'd, till they caught immeasurable mirth—
And laugh'd in light and music: soon, sweet madness
Was pour'd upon my heart, a soft and thrilling sadness.

XL.

Deep slumber fell on me:—my dreams were fire,
Soft and delightful thoughts did rest and hover
Like shadows o'er my brain; and strange desire,
The tempest of a passion, raging over
My tranquil soul, its depths with light did cover,
Which past; and calm, and darkness, sweeter far
Came—then I loved; but not a human lover!
For when I rose from sleep, the Morning Star
Shone through the woodbine wreaths which round my casement were.

XLI.

'T was like an eye which seem'd to smile on me.
I watch'd, till by the sun made pale, it sank
Under the billows of the heaving sea;
But from its beams deep love my spirit drank,
And to my brain the boundless world now shrank
Into one thought—one image—yes, for ever!
Even like the day-spring, pour'd on vapours dank,
The beams of that one Star did shoot and quiver
Through my benighted mind—and were extinguish'd never.

XLII.

The day past thus: at night, methought in dream
A shape of speechless beauty did appear:
It stood like light on a careering stream
Of golden clouds which shook the atmosphere;
A winged youth, his radiant brow did wear
The Morning Star: a wild dissolving bliss
Over my frame he breathed, approaching near,
And bent his eyes of kindling tenderness
Near mine, and on my lips impress'd a lingering kiss.

XLIII.

And said: a Spirit loves thee, mortal maiden,
How wilt thou prove thy worth? Then joy and sleep
Together fled, my soul was deeply laden,
And to the shore I went to muse and weep;
But as I moved, over my heart did creep
A joy less soft, but more profound and strong
Than my sweet dream; and it forbade to keep
The path of the sea-shore: that Spirit's tongue
Seem'd whispering in my heart, and bore my steps along.

XLIV.

How, to that vast and peopled city led,
Which was a field of holy warfare then,
I walk'd among the dying and the dead,
And shared in fearless deeds with evil men.
Calm as an angel in the dragon's den—
How I braved death for liberty and truth,
And spurn'd at peace, and power, and fame; and when
Those hopes had lost the glory of their youth,
How sadly I return'd—might move the hearer's ruth:

XLV.

Warm tears throng fast! the tale may not be said—
Know then, that when this grief had been subdued,
I was not left, like others, cold and dead;
The Spirit whom I loved in solitude
Sustain'd his child: the tempest-shaken wood,
The waves, the fountains, and the hush of night—
These were his voice, and well I understood
His smile divine, when the calm sea was bright
With silent stars, and Heaven was breathless with delight.

XLVI.

In lonely glens amid the roar of rivers,
When the dim nights were moonless, have I known
Joys which no tongue can tell; my pale lip quivers
When thought revisits them:—know thou alone,
That after many wondrous years were flown,
I was awaken'd by a shriek of woe;
And over me a mystic robe was thrown,
By viewless hands, and a bright Star did glow
Before my steps—the Snake then met his mortal foe.

XLVII.

Thou fearest not then the Serpent on thy heart!
Fear it! she said, with brief and passionate cry,
And spake no more: that silence made me start—
I look'd, and we were sailing pleasantly,
Swift as a cloud between the sea and sky,
Beneath the rising moon seen far away;
Mountains of ice, like sapphire, piled on high
Hemming the horizon round, in silence lay
On the still waters—these we did approach alway.

XLVIII.

And swift and swifter grew the vessel's motion,
So that a dizzy trance fell on my brain—
Wild music woke me: we had past the ocean
Which girds the pole, Nature's remotest reign—
And we glode fast o'er a pellucid plain
Of waters, azure with the noon-tide day.
Etherial mountains shone around—a Fane
Stood in the midst, girt by green isles which lay
On the blue sunny deep, resplendent far away.

XLIX.

It was a Temple, such as mortal hand
Has never built, nor ecstacy, nor dream,
Reared in the cities of enchanted land:
'T was likest Heaven, ere yet day's purple stream
Ebbs o'er the western forest, while the gleam
Of the unrisen moon among the clouds
Is gathering—when with many a golden beam
The thronging constellations rush in crowds,
Paving with fire the sky and the marmoreal floods.

L.

Like what may be conceived of this vast dome,
When from the depths which thought can seldom pierce
Genius beholds it rise, his native home,
Girt by the deserts of the Universe,
Yet, nor in painting's light, or mightier verse,
Or sculpture's marble language can invest
That shape to mortal sense—such glooms immerse
That incommunicable sight, and rest
Upon the labouring brain and overburthen'd breast.

LI.

Winding among the lawny islands fair,
Whose bloomy forests starred the shadowy deep,
The wingless boat paused where an ivory stair
Its fretwork in the crystal sea did steep,
Encircling that vast Fane's aerial heap:
We disembark'd, and through a portal wide
We pass'd—whose roof of moonstone carved, did keep
A glimmering o'er the forms on every side,
Sculptures like life and thought; immoveable, deep-eyed.

LII.

We came to a vast hall, whose glorious roof
Was diamond, which had drank the lightning's sheen
In darkness, and now pour'd it through the woof
Of spell-inwoven clouds hung there to screen
Its blinding splendour—through such veil was seen
That work of subtlest power, divine and rare;
Orb above orb, with starry shapes between,
And horn'd moons, and meteors strange and fair,
On night-black columns poised—one hollow hemisphere!

LIII.

Ten thousand columns in that quivering light
Distinct—between whose shafts wound far away
The long and labyrinthine aisles—more bright
With their own radiance than the Heaven of Day;
And on the jasper walls around, there lay
Paintings, the poesy of mightiest thought,
Which did the Spirit's history display;
A tale of passionate change, divinely taught,
Which, in their winged dance, unconscious Genii wrought.

LIV.

Beneath, there sate on many a sapphire throne,
The Great, who had departed from mankind,
A mighty Senate;—some, whose white hair shone
Like mountain snow, mild, beautiful, and blind.
Some, female forms, whose gestures beam'd with mind;
And ardent youths, and children bright and fair;
And some had lyres whose strings were intertwined
With pale and clinging flames, which ever there
Waked faint yet thrilling sounds that piereed the crystal air.

LV.

One seat was vacant in the midst, a throne,
Rear'd on a pyramid like sculptured flame,
Distinct with circling steps which rested on
Their own deep fire—soon as the Woman came
Into that hall, she shriek'd the Spirit's name
And fell; and vanish'd slowly from the sight.
Darkness arose from her dissolving frame,
Which gathering, fill'd that dome of woven light,
Blotting it's sphered stars with supernatural night.

LVI.

Then first, two glittering lights were seen to glide
In circles on the amethystine floor,
Small serpent eyes trailing from side to side,
Like meteors on a river's grassy shore,
They round each other roll'd, dilating more
And more—then rose, commingling into one,
One clear and mighty planet hanging o'er
A cloud of deepest shadow, which was thrown
Athwart the glowing steps and the crystalline throne.

LVII.

The cloud which rested on that cone of flame
Was cloven; beneath the planet sate a Form,
Fairer than tongue can speak or thought may frame,
The radiance of whose limbs rose-like and warm
Flow'd forth, and did with softest light inform
The shadowy dome, the sculptures, and the state
Of those assembled shapes—with clinging charm
Sinking upon their hearts and mine—He sate
Majestic, yet most mild—calm, yet compassionate.

LVIII.

Wonder and joy a passing faintness threw
Over my brow—a hand supported me,
Whose touch was magic strength: an eye of blue
Look'd into mine, like moonlight, soothingly;
And a voice said—Thou must a listener be
This day—two mighty Spirits now return,
Like birds of calm, from the world's raging sea,
They pour fresh light from Hope's immortal urn;
A tale of human power—despair not—list and learn!

LIX.

I look'd, and lo! one stood forth eloquently,
His eyes were dark and deep, and the clear brow
Which shadow'd them was like the morning sky,
The cloudless Heaven of Spring, when in their flow
Through the bright air, the soft winds as they blow
Wake the green world—his gestures did obey
The oracular mind that made his features glow,
And where his curved lips half open lay,
Passion's divinest stream had made impetuous way.

LX.

Beneath the darkness of his outspread hair
He stood thus beautiful: but there was One
Who sate beside him like his shadow there,
And held his hand—far lovelier—she was known
To be thus fair, by the few lines alone
Which through her floating locks and gather'd cloke,
Glances of soul-dissolving glory, shone:—
None else beheld her eyes—in him they woke
Memories which found a tongue, as thus he silence broke.

CANTO II.

I.

The star-light smile of children, the sweet looks
Of women, the fair breast from which I fed,
The murmur of the unreposing brooks,
And the green light which, shifting overhead,
Some tangled bower of vines around me shed,
The shells on the sea-sand, and the wild flowers,
The lamp-light through the rafters cheerly spread,
And on the twining flax—in life's young hours
These sights and sounds did nurse my spirits' folded powers.

II.

In Argolis, beside the echoing sea,
Such impulses within my mortal frame
Arose, and they were dear to memory,
Like tokens of the dead:—but others came
Soon, in another shape: the wondrous fame
Of the past world, the vital words and deeds
Of minds whom neither time nor change can tame,
Traditions dark and old, whence evil creeds
Start forth, and whose dim shade a stream of poison feeds.

III.

I heard, as all have heard, the various story
Of human life, and wept unwilling tears.
Feeble historians of its shame and glory,
False disputants on all its hopes and fears,
Victims who worshipp'd ruin,—chroniclers
Of daily scorn, and slaves who loathed their state;
Yet flattering power had given its ministers
A throne of judgment in the grave:—'t was fate,
That among such as these my youth should seek its mate.

IV.

The land in which I lived, by a fell bane
Was wither'd up. Tyrants dwelt side by side,
And stabled in our homes,—until the chain
Stifled the captive's cry, and to abide
That blasting curse men had no shame—all vied
In evil, slave and despot; fear with lust,
Strange fellowship through mutual hate had tied,
Like two dark serpents tangled in the dust,
Which on the paths of men their mingling poison thrust.

V.

Earth, our bright home, its mountains and its waters,
And the etherial shapes which are suspended
Over its green expanse, and those fair daughters,
The clouds, of Sun and Ocean, who have blended
The colours of the air since first extended
It cradled the young world, none wander'd forth
To see or feel: a darkness had descended
On every heart: the light which shows its worth,
Must among gentle thoughts and fearless take its birth.

VI.

This vital world, this home of happy spirits,
Was as a dungeon to my blasted kind,
All that despair from murder'd hope inherits
They sought, and in their helpless misery blind,
A deeper prison and heavier chains did find,
And stronger tyrants:—a dark gulf before,
The realm of a stern Ruler, yawn'd; behind,
Terror and Time conflicting drove, and bore
On their tempestuous flood the shrieking wretch from shore.

VII.

Out of that Ocean's wrecks had Guilt and Woe
Framed a dark dwelling for their homeless thought,
And, starting at the ghosts which to and fro
Glide o'er its dim and gloomy strand, had brought
The worship thence which they each other taught.
Well might men loathe their life, well might they turn
Even to the ills again from which they sought
Such refuge after death!—well might they learn
To gaze on this fair world with hopeless unconcern!

VIII.

For they all pined in bondage; body and soul,
Tyrant and slave, victim and torturer, bent
Before one Power, to which supreme control
Over their will by their own weakness lent,
Made all its many names omnipotent;
All symbols of things evil, all divine;
And hymns of blood or mockery, which rent
The air from all its fanes, did intertwine
Imposture's impious toils round each discordant shrine.

IX.

I heard, as all have heard, life's various story,
And in no careless heart transcribed the tale;
But, from the sneers of men who had grown hoary
In shame and scorn, from groans of crowds made pale
By famine, from a mother's desolate wail
O'er her polluted child, from innocent blood
Pour'd on the earth, and brows anxious and pale
With the heart's warfare; did I gather food
To feed my many thoughts—a tameless multitude!

X.

I wander'd through the wrecks of days departed
Far by the desolated shore, when even
O'er the still sea and jagged islets darted
The light of moonrise; in the northern Heaven,
Among the clouds near the horizon driven,
The mountains lay beneath one planet pale;
Around me, broken tombs and columns riven
Look'd vast in twilight, and the sorrowing gale
Waked in those ruins grey its everlasting wail!

XI.

I knew not who had framed these wonders then,
Nor had I heard the story of their deeds;
But dwellings of a race of mightier men,
And monuments of less ungentle creeds
Tell their own tale to him who wisely heeds
The language which they speak; and now, to me
The moonlight making pale the blooming weeds,
The bright stars shining in the breathless sea,
Interpreted those scrolls of mortal mystery.

XII.

Such man has been, and such may yet become!
Aye, wiser, greater, gentler, even than they
Who on the fragments of yon shatter'd dome
Have stamp'd the sign of power—I felt the sway
Of the vast stream of ages bear away
My floating thoughts—my heart beat loud and fast—
Even as a storm let loose beneath the ray
Of the still moon, my spirit onward past
Beneath Truth's steady beams upon its tumult cast.

XIII.

It shall be thus no more! too long, too long,
Sons of the glorious dead! have ye lain bound
In darkness and in ruin.—Hope is strong,
Justice and Truth their winged child have found—
Awake! arise! until the mighty sound
Of your career shall scatter in its gust
The thrones of the oppressor, and the ground
Hide the last altar's unregarded dust,
Whose Idol has so long betray'd your impious trust.

XIV.

It must be so—I will arise and waken
The multitude, and like a sulphurous hill,
Which on a sudden from its snows has shaken
The swoon of ages, it shall burst and fill
The world with cleansing fire; it must, it will—
It may not be restrain'd!—and who shall stand
Amid the rocking earthquake stedfast still,
But Laon? on high Freedom's desert land
A tower whose marble walls the leagued storms withstand!

XV.

One summer night, in commune with the hope
Thus deeply fed, amid those ruins grey
I watch'd, beneath the dark sky's starry cope;
And ever from that hour upon me lay
The burthen of this hope, and night or day,
In vision or in dream, clove to my breast:
Among mankind, or when gone far away
To the lone shores and mountains, 't was a guest,
Which follow'd where I fled, and watch'd when I did rest.

XVI.

These hopes found words thro' which my spirit sought
To weave a bondage of such sympathy,
As might create some response to the thought
Which ruled me now—and as the vapours lie
Bright in the outspread morning's radiancy,
So were these thoughts invested with the light
Of language; and all bosoms made reply
On which its lustre stream'd, whene'er it might
Thro' darkness wide and deep those tranced spirits smite.

XVII.

Yes, many an eye with dizzy tears was dim,
And oft I thought to clasp my own heart's brother,
When I could feel the listener's senses swim,
And hear his breath its own swift gaspings smother
Even as my words evoked them—and another,
And yet another, I did fondly deem,
Felt that we all were sons of one great mother;
And the cold truth such sad reverse did seem,
As to awake in grief from some delightful dream.

XVIII.

Yes, oft beside the ruin'd labyrinth
Which skirts the hoary caves of the green deep,
Did Laon and his friend on one grey plinth,
Round whose worn base the wild waves hiss and leap,
Resting at eve, a lofty converse keep:
And that this friend was false, may now be said
Calmly—that he like other men could weep
Tears which are lies, and could betray and spread
Snares for that guileless heart which for his own had bled.

XIX.

Then, had no great aim recompensed my sorrow,
I must have sought dark respite from its stress,
In dreamless rest, in sleep that sees no morrow—
For to tread life's dismaying wilderness
Without one smile to cheer, one voice to bless,
Amid the snares and scoffs of human kind,
Is hard—but I betray'd it not, nor less
With love that scorn'd return, sought to unbind
The interwoven clouds which make its wisdom blind.

XX.

With deathless minds which leave where they have past
A path of light, my soul communion knew;
Till from that glorious intercourse, at last,
As from a mine of magic store, I drew
Words which were weapons;—round my heart there grew
The adamantine armour of their power,
And from my fancy wings of golden hue
Sprang forth—yet not alone from wisdom's tower,
A minister of truth, these plumes young Laon bore.

XXI.

An orphan with my parents lived, whose eyes
Were load-stars of delight, which drew me home
When I might wander forth; nor did I prize
Aught human thing beneath Heaven's mighty dome
Beyond this child: so when sad hours were come,
And baffled hope like ice still clung to me,
Since kin were cold, and friends had now become
Heartless and false, I turn'd from all, to be,
Cythna, the only source of tears and smiles to thee.

XXII.

What wert thou then? A child most infantine,
Yet wandering far beyond that innocent age
In all but its sweet looks and mien divine;
Even then, methought, with the world's tyrant rage
A patient warfare thy young heart did wage,
When those soft eyes of scarcely conscious thought,
Some tale, or thine own fancies would engage
To overflow with tears, or converse fraught
With passion, o'er their depths its fleeting light had wrought.

XXIII.

She moved upon this earth a shape of brightness,
A power, that from its objects scarcely drew
One impulse of her being—in her lightness
Most like some radiant cloud of morning dew,
Which wanders through the waste air's pathless blue,
To nourish some far desert; she did seem
Beside me, gathering beauty as she grew,
Like the bright shade of some immortal dream
Which walks, when tempest sleeps, the wave of life's dark stream.

XXIV.

As mine own shadow was this child to me,
A second self, far dearer and more fair;
Which clothed in undissolving radiancy,
All those steep paths which languor and despair
Of human things, had made so dark and bare,
But which I trod alone—nor, till bereft
Of friends, and overcome by lonely care,
Knew I what solace for that loss was left,
Though by a bitter wound my trusting heart was cleft.

XXV.

Once she was dear, now she was all I had
To love in human life—this playmate sweet,
This child of twelve years old—so she was made
My sole associate, and her willing feet
Wander'd with mine where earth and ocean meet,
Beyond the aërial mountains whose vast cells
The unreposing billows ever beat,
Through forests wide and old, and lawny dells,
Where boughs of incense droop over the emerald wells.

XXVI.

And warm and light I felt her clasping hand
When twined in mine: she followed where I went,
Through the lone paths of our immortal land.
It had no waste, but some memorial lent
Which strung me to my toil—some monument
Vital with mind: then, Cythna by my side,
Until the bright and beaming day were spent,
Would rest, with looks entreating to abide,
Too earnest and too sweet ever to be denied.

XXVII.

And soon I could not have refused her—thus
For ever, day and night, we two were ne'er
Parted, but when brief sleep divided us:
And when the pauses of the lulling air
Of noon beside the sea, had made a lair
For her soothed senses, in my arms she slept,
And I kept watch over her slumbers there,
While, as the shifting visions o'er her swept,
Amid her innocent rest by turns she smiled and wept.

XXVIII.

And, in the murmur of her dreams was heard
Sometimes the name of Laon:—suddenly
She would arise, and like the secret bird
Whom sunset wakens, fill the shore and sky
With her sweet accents—a wild melody!
Hymns which my soul had woven to Freedom, strong
The source of passion whence they rose, to be;
Triumphant strains, which, like a spirit's tongue,
To the enchanted waves that child of glory sung,

XXIX.

Her white arms lifted through the shadowy stream
Of her loose hair—oh, excellently great
Seem'd to me then my purpose, the vast theme
Of those impassion'd songs, when Cythna sate
Amid the calm which rapture doth create
After its tumult, her heart vibrating,
Her spirit o'er the ocean's floating state
From her deep eyes far wandering, on the wing
Of visions that were mine, beyond its utmost spring.

XXX.

For, before Cythna loved it, had my song
Peopled with thoughts the boundless universe,
A mighty congregation, which were strong
Where'er they trod the darkness to disperse
The cloud of that unutterable curse
Which clings upon mankind :—all things became
Slaves to my holy and heroic verse,
Earth, sea and sky, the planets, life and fame
And fate, or whate'er else binds the world's wondrous frame.

XXXI.

And this beloved child thus felt the sway
Of my conceptions, gathering like a cloud
The very wind on which it rolls away :
Hers too were all my thoughts, ere yet endow'd
With music and with light, their fountains flow'd
In poesy; and her still and earnest face,
Pallid with feelings which intensely glow'd
Within, was turn'd on mine with speechless grace,
Watching the hopes which there her heart had learn'd to trace.

XXXII.

In me, communion with this purest being
Kindled intenser zeal, and made me wise
In knowledge, which in hers mine own mind seeing,
Left in the human world few mysteries :
How without fear of evil or disguise
Was Cythna!—what a spirit strong and mild,
Which death, or pain or peril could despise,
Yet melt in tenderness! what genius wild,
Yet mighty, was inclosed within one simple child!

XXXIII.

New lore was this—old age with its grey hair,
And wrinkled legends of unworthy things,
And icy sneers, is nought : it cannot dare
To burst the chains which life for ever flings
On the entangled soul's aspiring wings,
So is it cold and cruel, and is made
The careless slave of that dark power which brings
Evil, like blight on man, who still betray'd,
Laughs o'er the grave in which his living hopes are laid.

XXXIV.

Nor are the strong and the severe to keep
The empire of the world : thus Cythna taught
Even in the visions of her eloquent sleep,
Unconscious of the power through which she wrought
The woof of such intelligible thought,
As from the tranquil strength which cradled lay
In her smile-peopled rest, my spirit sought
Why the deceiver and the slave has sway
O'er heralds so divine of truth's arising day.

XXXV.

Within that fairest form, the female mind
Untainted by the poison clouds which rest
On the dark world, a sacred home did find :
But else, from the wide earth's maternal breast,
Victorious Evil, which had dispossest
All native power, had those fair children torn,
And made them slaves to soothe his vile unrest,
And minister to lust its joys forlorn,
Till they had learned to breathe the atmosphere of scorn.

XXXVI.

This misery was but coldly felt, till she
Became my only friend, who had indued
My purpose with a wider sympathy;
Thus, Cythna mourn'd with me the servitude
In which the half of humankind were mew'd
Victims of lust and hate, the slaves of slaves,
She mourn'd that grace and power were thrown as food
To the hyena Lust, who, among graves,
Over his loathed meal, laughing in agony, raves.

XXXVII.

And I, still gazing on that glorious child,
Even as these thoughts flush'd o'er her.—« Cythna sweet,
Well with the world art thou unreconciled;
Never will peace and human nature meet
Till free and equal man and woman greet
Domestic peace; and ere this power can make
In human hearts its calm and holy seat:
This slavery must be broken»—as I spake,
From Cythna's eyes a light of exultation brake.

XXXVIII.

She replied earnestly :—« It shall be mine,
This task, mine, Laon!—thou hast much to gain;
Nor wilt thou at poor Cythna's pride repine,
If she should lead a happy female train
To meet thee over the rejoicing plain,
When myriads at thy call shall throng around
The Golden City.»—Then the child did strain
My arm upon her tremulous heart, and wound
Her own about my neck, till some reply she found.

XXXIX.

I smiled, and spake not—«Wherefore dost thou smile
At what I say? Laon, I am not weak,
And though my cheek might become pale the while,
With thee, if thou desirest, will I seek
Through their array of banded slaves to wreak
Ruin upon the tyrants. I had thought
It was more hard to turn my unpractised cheek
To scorn and shame, and this beloved spot
And thee, O dearest friend, to leave and murmur not.

XL.

« Whence came I what I am? thou, Laon, knowest
How a young child should thus undaunted be;
Methinks, it is a power which thou bestowest,
Through which I seek, by most resembling thee,
So to become most good, and great and free,
Yet far beyond this Ocean's utmost roar
In towers and huts are many like to me,
Who, could they see thine eyes, or feel such lore
As I have learnt from them, like me would fear no more.

XLI.

« Think'st thou that I shall speak unskilfully,
And none will heed me? I remember now,
How once, a slave in tortures doom'd to die,
Was saved, because in accents sweet and low
He sung a song his Judge loved long ago,
As he was led to death.—All shall relent
Who hear me—tears as mine have flow'd, shall flow,
Hearts beat as mine now beats, with such intent
As renovates the world; a will omnipotent!

XLII.

« Yes, I will tread Pride's golden palaces,
Through Penury's roofless huts and squalid cells
Will I descend, where'er in abjectness
Woman with some vile slave her tyrant dwells,
There with the music of thine own sweet spells
Will disenchant the captives, and will pour
For the despairing, from the crystal wells
Of thy deep spirit, reason's mighty lore,
And power shall then abound, and hope arise once more.

XLIII.

« Can man be free if woman be a slave?
Chain one who lives, and breathes this boundless air
To the corruption of a closed grave!
Can they whose mates are beasts, condemn'd to bear
Scorn, heavier far than toil or anguish, dare
To trample their oppressors? in their home
Among their babes, thou knowest a curse would wear
The shape of woman—hoary crime would come
Behind, and fraud rebuild religion's tottering dome.

XLIV.

« I am a child:—I would not yet depart.
When I go forth alone, bearing the lamp
Aloft which thou hast kindled in my heart,
Millions of slaves from many a dungeon damp
Shall leap in joy, as the benumbing cramp
Of ages leaves their limbs—no ill may harm
Thy Cythna ever—truth its radiant stamp
Has fix'd, as an invulnerable charm
Upon her children's brow, dark falsehood to disarm.

XLV.

« Wait yet awhile for the appointed day—
Thou wilt depart, and I with tears shall stand
Watching thy dim sail skirt the ocean grey;
Amid the dwellers of this lonely land
I shall remain alone—and thy command
Shall then dissolve the world's unquiet trance,
And, multitudinous as the desert sand
Borne on the storm, its millions shall advance,
Thronging round thee, the light of their deliverance.

XLVI.

« Then, like the forests of some pathless mountain,
Which from remotest glens two warring winds
Involve in fire, which not the loosen'd fountain
Of broadest floods might quench, shall all the kinds
Of evil, catch from our uniting minds
The spark which must consume them;—Cythna then
Will have cast off the impotence that binds
Her childhood now, and through the paths of men
Will pass, as the charm'd bird that haunts the serpent's den.

XLVII.

« We part!—O Laon, I must dare nor tremble
To meet those looks no more!—Oh, heavy stroke,
Sweet brother of my soul! can I dissemble
The agony of this thought?»—As thus she spoke
The gather'd sobs her quivering accents broke,
And in my arms she hid her beating breast.
I remain'd still for tears—sudden she woke
As one awakes from sleep, and wildly prest
My bosom, her whole frame impetuously possest.

XLVIII.

« We part to meet again—but yon blue waste,
Yon desert wide and deep holds no recess,
Within whose happy silence, thus embraced
We might survive all ills in one caress:
Nor doth the grave—I fear 't is passionless—
Nor yon cold vacant Heaven:—we meet again
Within the minds of men, whose lips shall bless
Our memory, and whose hopes its light retain
When these dissever'd bones are trodden in the plain.»

XLIX.

I could not speak, though she had ceased, for now
The fountains of her feeling, swift and deep,
Seem'd to suspend the tumult of their flow;
So we arose, and by the star-light steep
Went homeward—neither did we speak nor weep,
But pale, were calm with passion—thus subdued
Like evening shades that o'er the mountains creep,
We moved towards our home; where, in this mood,
Each from the other sought refuge in solitude.

CANTO III.

I.

What thoughts had sway o'er Cythna's lonely slumber
That night, I know not; but my own did seem
As if they might ten thousand years outnumber
Of waking life, the visions of a dream,
Which hid in one dim gulf the troubled stream
Of mind; a boundless chaos wild and vast,
Whose limits yet were never memory's theme:
And I lay struggling as its whirlwinds past,
Sometimes for rapture sick, sometimes for pain aghast.

II.

Two hours, whose mighty circle did embrace
More time than might make grey the infant world,
Rolled thus, a weary and tumultuous space:
When the third came, like mist on breezes curl'd
From my dim sleep a shadow was unfurl'd:
Methought, upon the threshold of a cave
I sate with Cythna; drooping briony, pearled
With dew from the wild streamlet's shatter'd wave,
Hung, where we sate to taste the joys which Nature gave.

III.

We lived a day as we were wont to live,
But Nature had a robe of glory on,
And the bright air o'er every shape did weave
Intenser hues, so that the herbless stone,
The leafless bough among the leaves alone,
Had being clearer than its own could be,
And Cythna's pure and radiant self was shown
In this strange vision, so divine to me,
That if I loved before, now love was agony.

IV.

Morn fled, noon came, evening, then night descended,
And we prolong'd calm talk beneath the sphere
Of the calm moon—when, suddenly was blended
With our repose a nameless sense of fear;
And from the cave behind I seem'd to hear
Sounds gathering upwards!—accents incomplete,
And stifled shrieks,—and now, more near and near,
A tumult and a rush of thronging feet
The cavern's secret depths beneath the earth did beat.

V.

The scene was changed, and away, away, away!
Through the air and over the sea we sped,
And Cythna in my sheltering bosom lay,
And the winds bore me—through the darkness spread
Around, the gaping earth then vomited
Legions of foul and ghastly shapes, which hung
Upon my flight; and ever as we fled,
They pluck'd at Cythna—soon to me then clung
A sense of actual things those monstrous dreams among.

VI.

And I lay struggling in the impotence
Of sleep, while outward life had burst its bound,
Though, still deluded, strove the tortured sense
To its dire wanderings to adapt the sound
Which in the light of morn was pour'd around
Our dwelling—breathless, pale, and unaware
I rose, and all the cottage crowded found
With armed men, whose glittering swords were bare,
And whose degraded limbs the tyrant's garb did wear.

VII.

And ere with rapid lips and gather'd brow
I could demand the cause—a feeble shriek—
It was a feeble shriek, faint, far and low,
Arrested me—my mien grew calm and meek,
And grasping a small knife, I went to seek
That voice among the crowd—'t was Cythna's cry!
Beneath most calm resolve did agony wreak
Its whirlwind rage:—so I past quietly
Till I beheld, where bound, that dearest child did lie.

VIII.

I started to behold her, for delight
And exultation, and a joyance free,
Solemn, serene and lofty, fill'd the light
Of the calm smile with which she look'd on me:
So that I fear'd some brainless ecstacy,
Wrought from that bitter woe, had wilder'd her—
"Farewell,! farewell!" she said, as I drew nigh.
"At first my peace was marr'd by this strange stir,
Now I am calm as truth—its chosen minister.

IX.

"Look not so, Laon—say farewell in hope,
These bloody men are but the slaves who bear
Their mistress to her task—it was my scope
The slavery where they drag me now, to share,
And among captives willing chains to wear
Awhile—the rest thou knowest—return, dear friend!
Let our first triumph trample the despair
Which would ensnare us now, for in the end.
In victory or in death our hopes and fears must blend."

X.

These words had fallen on my unheeding ear,
Whilst I had watch'd the motions of the crew
With seeming careless glance; not many were
Around her, for their comrades just withdrew
To guard some other victim—so I drew
My knife, and with one impulse, suddenly
All unaware three of their number slew,
And grasp'd a fourth by the throat, and with loud cry
My countrymen invoked to death or liberty!

XI.

What follow'd then, I know not—for a stroke
On my raised arm and naked head, came down,
Filling my eyes with blood—when I awoke,
I felt that they had bound me in my swoon,
And up a rock which overhangs the town,
By the steep path were bearing me: below,
The plain was fill'd with slaughter,—overthrown
The vineyards and the harvests, and the glow
Of blazing roofs shone far o'er the white Ocean's flow.

XII.

Upon that rock a mighty column stood,
Whose capital seemed sculptured in the sky,
Which to the wanderers o'er the solitude
Of distant seas, from ages long gone by,
Had made a landmark; o'er its height to fly
Scarcely the cloud, the vulture, or the blast,
Has power—and when the shades of evening lie
On Earth and Ocean, its carved summits cast
The sunken day-light far through the aërial waste.

XIII.

They bore me to a cavern in the hill
Beneath that column, and unbound me there:
And one did strip me stark; and one did fill
A vessel from the putrid pool; one bare
A lighted torch, and four with friendless care
Guided my steps the cavern-paths along,
Then up a steep and dark and narrow stair
We wound, until the torches' fiery tongue
Amid the gushing day beamless and pallid hung.

XIV.

They raised me to the platform of the pile,
That column's dizzy height:—the grate of brass
Through which they thrust me, open stood the while,
As to its ponderous and suspended mass,
With chains which eat into the flesh, alas!
With brazen links, my naked limbs they bound:
The grate, as they departed to repass,
With horrid clangour fell, and the far sound
Of their retiring steps in the dense gloom was drown'd.

XV.

The noon was calm and bright:—around that column
The overhanging sky and circling sea
Spread forth in silentness profound and solemn
The darkness of brief frenzy cast on me,
So that I knew not my own misery:
The islands and the mountains in the day
Like clouds reposed afar; and I could see
The town among the woods below that lay,
And the dark rocks which bound the bright and glassy bay.

XVI.

It was so calm, that scarce the feathery weed
Sown by some eagle on the topmost stone
Sway'd in the air:—so bright, that noon did breed
No shadow in the sky beside mine own—
Mine, and the shadow of my chain alone.
Below the smoke of roofs involved in flame
Rested like night, all else was clearly shown
In that broad glare, yet sound to me none came,
But of the living blood that ran within my frame.

XVII.

The peace of madness fled, and ah, too soon!
A ship was lying on the sunny main,
Its sails were flagging in the breathless noon—
Its shadow lay beyond—that sight again
Waked, with its presence, in my tranced brain
The stings of a known sorrow, keen and cold:
I knew that ship bore Cythna o'er the plain
Of waters, to her blighting slavery sold,
And watch'd it with such thoughts as must remain untold.

XVIII.

I watch'd, until the shades of evening wrapt
Earth like an exhalation—then the bark
Moved, for that calm was by the sunset snapt.
It moved a speck upon the Ocean dark:
Soon the wan stars came forth, and I could mark
Its path no more!—I sought to close mine eyes,
But like the balls, their lids were stiff and stark;
I would have risen, but ere that I could rise,
My parched skin was split with piercing agonies.

XIX.

I gnaw'd my brazen chain, and sought to sever
Its adamantine links, that I might die:
O Liberty! forgive the base endeavour,
Forgive me, if reserved for victory,
The Champion of thy faith e'er sought to fly.—
That starry night, with its clear silence, sent
Tameless resolve which laugh'd at misery
Into my soul—link'd remembrance lent
To that such power, to me such a severe content.

XX.

To breathe, to be, to hope, or to despair
And die, I question'd not; nor, though the Sun
Its shafts of agony kindling through the air
Moved over me, nor though in evening dun,
Or when the stars their visible courses run,
Or morning, the wide universe was spread
In dreary calmness round me, did I shun
Its presence, nor seek refuge with the dead
From one faint hope whose flower a dropping poison shed.

XXI.

Two days thus past—I neither raved nor died—
Thirst raged within me, like a scorpion's nest
Built in mine entrails: I had spurn'd aside
The water-vessel, while despair possest
My thoughts, and now no drop remain'd! the uprest
Of the third sun brought hunger—but the crust
Which had been left, was to my craving breast
Fuel, not food. I chew'd the bitter dust,
And bit my bloodless arm, and lick'd the brazen rust.

XXII.

My brain began to fail when the fourth morn
Burst o'er the golden isles—a fearful sleep,
Which through the caverns dreary and forlorn
Of the riven soul, sent its foul dreams to sweep
With whirlwind swiftness—a fall far and deep,—
A gulf, a void, a sense of senselessness—
These things dwelt in me, even as shadows keep
Their watch in some dim charnel's loneliness,
A shoreless sea, a sky sunless and planetless!

XXIII.

The forms which peopled this terrific trance
I well remember—like a quire of devils,
Around me they involved a giddy dance;
Legions seem'd gathering from the misty levels
Of Ocean, to supply those ceaseless revels,
Foul, ceaseless shadows:—thought could not divide
The actual world from these entangling evils,
Which so bemock'd themselves, that I descried
All shapes like mine own self, hideously multiplied.

XXIV.

The sense of day and night, of false and true,
Was dead within me. Yet two visions burst
That darkness—one, as since that hour I knew,
Was not a phantom of the realms accurst,
Where then my spirit dwelt—but of the first
I know not yet, was it a dream or no.
But both, though not distincter, were immersed
In hues which, when through memory's waste they flow,
Made their divided streams more bright and rapid now.

XXV.

Methought that gate was lifted, and the seven
Who brought me thither, four stiff corpses bare,
And from the frieze to the four winds of Heaven
Hung them on high by the entangled hair:
Swarthy were three—the fourth was very fair:
As they retired, the golden moon upsprung,
And eagerly, out in the giddy air,
Leaning that I might eat, I stretch'd and clung
Over the shapeless depth in which those corpses hung.

XXVI.

A woman's shape, now lank and cold and blue,
The dwelling of the many-colour'd worm,
Hung there, the white and hollow cheek I drew
To my dry lips—what radiance did inform
Those horny eyes? whose was that wither'd form?
Alas, alas! it seem'd that Cythna's ghost
Laugh'd in those looks, and that the flesh was warm
Within my teeth!—a whirlwind keen as frost
Then in its sinking gulfs my sickening spirit tost.

XXVII.

Then seem'd it that a tameless hurricane
Arose, and bore me in its dark career
Beyond the sun, beyond the stars that wane
On the verge of formless space—it languish'd there,
And dying, left a silence lone and drear,
More horrible than famine:—in the deep
The shape of an old man did then appear,
Stately and beautiful, that dreadful sleep
His heavenly smiles dispersed, and I could wake and weep.

XXVIII.

And when the blinding tears had fallen, I saw
That column, and those corpses, and the moon,
And felt the poisonous tooth of hunger gnaw
My vitals, I rejoiced, as if the boon
Of senseless death would be accorded soon;—
When from that stony gloom a voice arose,
Solemn and sweet as when low winds attune
The midnight pines, the grate did then unclose,
And on that reverend form the moonlight did repose.

XXIX.

He struck my chains, and gently spake and smiled:
As they were loosen'd by that Hermit old,
Mine eyes were of their madness half beguiled,
To answer those kind looks—he did infold
His giant arms around me, to uphold
My wretched frame, my scorched limbs he wound
In linen moist and balmy, and as cold
As dew to drooping leaves:—the chain, with sound
Like earthquake, through the chasm of that steep stair did bound,

XXX.

As lifting me, it fell!—What next I heard,
Were billows leaping on the harbour bar,
And the shrill sea-wind, whose breath idly stirr'd
My hair;—I look'd abroad, and saw a star
Shining beside a sail, and distant far
That mountain and its column, the known mark
Of those who in the wide deep wandering are,
So that I fear'd some Spirit, fell and dark,
In trance had lain me thus within a fiendish bark.

XXXI.

For now indeed, over the salt sea billow
I sail'd: yet dared not look upon the shape
Of him who ruled the helm, although the pillow
For my light head was hollow'd in his lap,
And my bare limbs his mantle did enwrap,
Fearing it was a fiend: at last, he bent
O'er me his aged face, as if to snap
Those dreadful thoughts the gentle grandsire bent,
And to my inmost soul his soothing looks he sent.

XXXII.

A soft and healing potion to my lips
At intervals he raised—now look'd on high,
To mark if yet the starry giant dips
His zone in the dim sea—now cheeringly,
Though he said little, did he speak to me.
"It is a friend beside thee—take good cheer,
Poor victim, thou art now at liberty!"
I joy'd as those a human tone to hear,
Who in cells deep and lone have languish'd many a year.

XXXIII.

A dim and feeble joy, whose glimpses oft
Were quench'd in a relapse of wildering dreams,
Yet still methought we sail'd, until aloft
The stars of night grew pallid, and the beams
Of morn descended on the ocean-streams,
And still that aged man, so grand and mild,
Tended me, even as some sick mother seems
To hang in hope over a dying child,
Till in the azure East darkness again was piled.

XXXIV.

And then the night-wind steaming from the shore,
Sent odours dying sweet across the sea,
And the swift boat the little waves which bore,
Were cut by its keen keel, though slantingly;
Soon I could hear the leaves sigh, and could see
The myrtle-blossoms starring the dim grove,
As past the pebbly beach the boat did flee
On sidelong wing, into a silent cove,
Where ebon pines a shade under the starlight wove.

CANTO IV.

I.

The old man took the oars, and soon the bark
Smote on the beach beside a tower of stone;
It was a crumbling heap, whose portal dark
With blooming ivy trails was overgrown;
Upon whose floor the spangling sands were strown,
And rarest sea-shells, which the eternal flood,
Slave to the mother of the months, had thrown
Within the walls of that grey tower, which stood
A changeling of man's art, nursed amid Nature's brood.

II.

When the old man his boat had anchored,
He wound me in his arms with tender care,
And very few, but kindly words he said,
And bore me through the tower adown a stair,
Whose smooth descent some ceaseless step to wear
For many a year had fail'n—We came at last
To a small chamber, which with mosses rare
Was tapestried, where me his soft hands placed
Upon a couch of grass and oak-leaves interlaced.

III.

The moon was darting through the lattices
Its yellow light, warm as the beams of day—
So warm, that to admit the dewy breeze,
The old man open'd them; the moonlight lay
Upon a lake whose waters wore their play
Even to the threshold of that lonely home:
Within was seen in the dim wavering ray,
The antique sculptured roof, and many a tome
Whose lore had made that sage all that he had become.

IV.

The rock-built barrier of the sea was past,—
And I was on the margin of a lake,
A lonely lake, amid the forests vast
And snowy mountains:—did my spirit wake
From sleep, as many-coloured as the snake
That girds eternity? in life and truth,
Might not my heart its cravings ever slake?
Was Cythna then a dream, and all my youth,
And all its hopes and fears, and all its joy and ruth?

V.

Thus madness came again,—a milder madness,
Which darken'd nought but time's unquiet flow
With supernatural shades of clinging sadness;
That gentle Hermit, in my helpless woe,
By my sick couch was busy to and fro,
Like a strong spirit ministrant of good:
When I was healed, he led me forth to show
The wonders of his sylvan solitude,
And we together sate by that isle-fretted flood.

VI.

He knew his soothing words to weave with skill
From all my madness told; like mine own heart,
Of Cythna would he question me, until
That thrilling name had ceased to make me start,
From his familiar lips—it was not art,
Of wisdom and of justice when he spoke—
When 'mid soft looks of pity, there would dart
A glance as keen as is the lightning's stroke
When it doth rive the knots of some ancestral oak.

VII.

Thus slowly from my brain the darkness roll'd,
My thoughts their due array did re-assume
Through the enchantments of that Hermit old;
Then I bethought me of the glorious doom
Of those who sternly struggle to relume
The lamp of Hope o'er man's bewilder'd lot,
And, sitting by the waters, in the gloom
Of eve, to that friend's heart I told my thought—
That heart which had grown old, but had corrupted not.

VIII.

That hoary man had spent his livelong age
In converse with the dead, who leave the stamp
Of over-burning thoughts on many a page,
When they are gone into the senseless damp
Of graves;—his spirit thus became a lamp
Of splendour, like to those on which it fed
Through peopled haunts, the City and the Camp,
Deep thirst for knowledge had his footsteps led,
And all the ways of men among mankind he read.

IX.

But custom maketh blind and obdurate
The loftiest hearts:—he had beheld the woe
In which mankind was bound, but deem'd that fate
Which made them abject, would preserve them so;
And in such faith, some stedfast joy to know,
He sought this cell: but when fame went abroad,
That one in Argolis did undergo
Torture for liberty, and that the crowd
High truths from gifted lips had heard and understood;

X.

And that the multitude was gathering wide;
His spirit leap'd within his aged frame,
In lonely peace he could no more abide,
But to the land on which the victor's flame
Had fed, my native land, the Hermit came:
Each heart was there a shield, and every tongue
Was as a sword of truth—young Laon's name
Rallied their secret hopes, though tyrants sung
Hymns of triumphant joy our scatter'd tribes among.

XI.

He came to the lone column on the rock,
And with his sweet and mighty eloquence
The hearts of those who watch'd it did unlock,
And made them melt in tears of penitence.
They gave him entrance free to bear me thence.
Since this, the old man said, seven years are spent,
While slowly truth on thy benighted sense
Has crept; the hope which wilder'd it has lent,
Meanwhile, to me the power of a sublime intent.

XII.

« Yes, from the records of my youthful state,
And from the lore of bards and sages old,
From whatsoe'er my waken'd thoughts create
Out of the hopes of thine aspirings bold,
Have I collected language to unfold
Truth to my countrymen; from shore to shore
Doctrines of human power my words have told,
They have been heard, and men aspire to more
Than they have ever gain'd or ever lost of yore.

XIII.

« In secret chambers parents read, and weep,
My writings to their babes, no longer blind;
And young men gather when their tyrants sleep,
And vows of faith each to the other bind;
And marriageable maidens, who have pined
With love, till life seem'd melting through their look,
A warmer zeal, a nobler hope now find;
And every bosom thus is rapt and shook,
Like autumn's myriad leaves in one swoln mountain brook.

XIV.

« The tyrants of the Golden City tremble
At voices which are heard about the streets,
The ministers of fraud can scarce dissemble
The lies of their own heart; but when one meets
Another at the shrine, he inly weets,
Though he says nothing, that the truth is known;
Murderers are pale upon the judgment seats,
And gold grows vile even to the wealthy crone,
And laughter fills the Fane, and curses shake the Throne.

XV.

« Kind thoughts, and mighty hopes, and gentle deeds
Abound, for fearless love, and the pure law
Of mild equality and peace, succeeds
To faiths which long have held the world in awe,
Bloody and false, and cold:—as whirlpools draw
All wrecks of Ocean to their chasm, the sway
Of thy strong genius, Laon, which foresaw
This hope, compels all spirits to obey,
Which round thy secret strength now throng in wide array.

XVI.

« For I have been thy passive instrument»—
(As thus the old man spake, his countenance
Gleamed on me like a spirit's)—« thou hast lent
To me, to all, the power to advance
Towards this unforeseen deliverance
From our ancestral chains—aye, thou didst rear
That lamp of hope on high, which time nor chance,
Nor change may not extinguish, and my share
Of good, was o'er the world its gather'd beams to bear.

XVII.

« But I, alas! am both unknown and old,
And though the woof of wisdom I know well
To dye in hues of language, I am cold
In seeming, and the hopes which inly dwell,
My manners note that I did long repel;
But Laon's name to the tumultuous throng
Were like the star whose beams the waves compel
And tempests, and his soul-subduing tongue
Were as a lance to quell the mailed crest of wrong.

XVIII.

« Perchance blood need not flow, if thou at length
Wouldst rise, perchance the very slaves would spare
Their brethren and themselves; great is the strength
Of words—for lately did a maiden fair,
Who from her childhood has been taught to bear
The tyrant's heaviest yoke, arise, and make
Her sex the law of truth and freedom hear,
And with these quiet words—'for thine own sake
I prithee spare me;'—did with ruth so take

XIX.

« All hearts, that even the torturer who had bound
Her meek calm frame, ere it was yet impaled,
Loosen'd her weeping then; nor could be found
One human hand to harm her—unassail'd
Therefore she walks through the great City, veil'd
In virtue's adamantine eloquence,
'Gainst scorn, and death and pain thus trebly mail'd,
And blending in the smiles of that defence,
The Serpent and the Dove, Wisdom and Innocence.

XX.

« The wild-eyed women throng around her path:
From their luxurious dungeons, from the dust
Of meaner thralls, from the oppressor's wrath,
Or the caresses of his sated lust,
They congregate:—in her they put their trust;
The tyrants send their armed slaves to quell
Her power;—they, even like a thunder gust
Caught by some forest, bend beneath the spell
Of that young maiden's speech, and to their chiefs rebel.

XXI.

« Thus she doth equal laws and justice teach
To woman, outraged and polluted long;
Gathering the sweetest fruit in human reach
For those fair hands now free, while armed wrong
Trembles before her look, though it be strong;
Thousands thus dwell beside her, virgins bright,
And matrons with their babes, a stately throng!
Lovers renew the vows which they did plight
In early faith, and hearts long parted now unite,

XXII.

« And homeless orphans find a home near her,
And those poor victims of the proud, no less,
Fair wrecks, on whom the smiling world with stir,
Thrusts the redemption of its wickedness:—
In squalid huts, and in its palaces
Sits Lust alone, while o'er the land is borne
Her voice, whose awful sweetness doth repress
All evil, and her foes relenting turn,
And cast the vote of love in hope's abandon'd urn.

XXIII.

« So in the populous City, a young maiden
Has baffled havoc of the prey which he
Marks as his own, whene'er with chains o'erladen
Men make them arms to hurl down tyranny,
False arbiter between the bound and free;
And o'er the land, in hamlets and in towns
The multitudes collect tumultuously,
And throng in arms; but tyranny disowns
Their claim, and gathers strength around its trembling thrones.

XXIV.

« Blood soon, although unwillingly, to shed
The free cannot forbear—the Queen of Slaves,
The hood-wink'd Angel of the blind and dead,
Custom, with iron mace points to the graves
When her own standard desolately waves
Over the dust of Prophets and of Kings.
Many yet stand in her array—'she paves
Her path with human hearts,' and o'er it flings
The wildering gloom of her immeasurable wings.

XXV.

« There is a plain beneath the City's wall,
Bounded by misty mountains, wide and vast,
Millions there lift at Freedom's thrilling call
Ten thousand standards wide, they load the blast
Which bears one sound of many voices past,
And startles on his throne their sceptred foe:
He sits amid his idle pomp aghast,
And that his power hath past away, doth know—
Why pause the victor swords to seal his overthrow?

XXVI.

« The tyrant's guards resistance yet maintain:
Fearless, and fierce, and hard as beasts of blood;
They stand a speck amid the peopled plain;
Carnage and ruin have been made their food
From infancy—ill has become their good,
And for its hateful sake their will has wove
The chains which eat their hearts—the multitude
Surrounding them, with words of human love,
Seek from their own decay their stubborn minds to move.

XXVII.

« Over the land is felt a sudden pause,
As night and day those ruthless bands around
The watch of love is kept:—a trance which awes
The thoughts of men with hope—as when the sound
Of whirlwind, whose fierce blasts the waves and clouds confound,
Dies suddenly, the mariner in fear
Feels silence sink upon his heart—thus bound,
The conquerors pause, and oh! may freemen ne'er
Clasp the relentless knees of Dread, the murderer!

XXVIII.

« If blood be shed, 't is but a change and choice
Of bonds,—from slavery to cowardice
A wretched fall!—uplift thy charmed voice,
Pour on those evil men the love that lies
Hovering within those spirit-soothing eyes—
Arise, my friend, farewell!»—As thus he spake,
From the green earth lightly I did arise,
As one out of dim dreams that doth awake,
And look'd upon the depth of that reposing lake.

XXIX.

I saw my countenance reflected there;—
And then my youth fell on me like a wind
Descending on still waters—my thin hair
Was prematurely grey, my face was lined
With channels, such as suffering leaves behind,
Not age; my brow was pale, but in my cheek
And lips a flush of gnawing fire did find
Their food and dwelling; though mine eyes might speak
A subtle mind and strong within a frame thus weak.

XXX.

And though their lustre now was spent and faded,
Yet in my hollow looks and wither'd mien
The likeness of a shape for which was braided
The brightest woof of genius, still was seen—
One who, methought, had gone from the world's scene,
And left it vacant—'t was her lover's face—
It might resemble her—it once had been
The mirror of her thoughts, and still the grace
Which her mind's shadow cast, left there a lingering trace.

XXXI.

What then was I? She slumber'd with the dead.
Glory and joy and peace, had come and gone.
Doth the cloud perish, when the beams are fled
Which steep'd its skirts in gold? or dark and lone,
Doth it not through the paths of night unknown,
On outspread wings of its own wind upborne
Pour rain upon the earth? the stars are shown,
When the cold moon sharpens her silver horn
Under the sea, and make the wide night not forlorn.

XXXII.

Strengthen'd in heart, yet sad, that aged man
I left, with interchange of looks and tears,
And lingering speech, and to the Camp began
My way. O'er many a mountain chain which rears
Its hundred crests aloft, my spirit bears
My frame; o'er many a dale and many a moor,
And gaily now me seems serene earth wears
The bloomy spring's star-bright investiture,
A vision which ought sad from sadness might allure.

XXXIII.

My powers revived within me, and I went
As one whom winds waft o'er the bending grass,
Through many a vale of that broad continent.
At night when I reposed, fair dreams did pass
Before my pillow;—my own Cythna was
Not like a child of death, among them ever;
When I arose from rest, a woeful mass
That gentlest sleep seem'd from my life to sever,
As if the light of youth were not withdrawn for ever.

XXXIV.

Aye as I went, that maiden who had rear'd
The torch of Truth afar, of whose high deeds
The Hermit in his pilgrimage had heard,
Haunted my thoughts.—Ah, Hope its sickness feeds
With whatsoe'er it finds, or flowers or weeds!
Could she be Cythna?—Was that corpse a shade
Such as self-torturing thought from madness breeds?
Why was this hope not torture? yet it made
A light around my steps which would not ever fade.

CANTO V.

I.

Over the utmost hill at length I sped,
A snowy steep:—the moon was hanging low
Over the Asian mountains, and outspread
The plain, the City, and the Camp below,
Skirted the midnight Ocean's glimmering flow,
The City's moon-lit spires and myriad lamps,
Like stars in a sublunar sky did glow,
And fires blazed far amid the scatter'd camps,
Like springs of flame, which burst where'er swift Earthquake stamps.

II.

All slept but those in watchful arms who stood,
And those who sate tending the beacon's light,
And the few sounds from that vast multitude
Made silence more profound—Oh, what a might
Of human thought was cradled in that night!
How many hearts impenetrably veil'd
Beat underneath its shade, what secret fight
Evil and good, in woven passions mail'd,
Waged through that silent throng; a war that never fail'd!

III.

And now the Power of Good held victory
So, through the labyrinth of many a tent,
Among the silent millions who did lie
In innocent sleep, exultingly I went;
The moon had left Heaven desert now, but lent
From eastern morn the first faint lustre show'd
An armed youth—over his spear he bent
His downward face—"A friend!" I cried aloud,
And quickly common hopes made freemen understood.

IV.

I sate beside him while the morning beam
Crept slowly over Heaven, and talk'd with him
Of those immortal hopes, a glorious theme!
Which led us forth, until the stars grew dim:
And all the while, methought, his voice did swim,
As if it drowned in remembrance were
Of thoughts which make the moist eyes overbrim:
At last, when daylight 'gan to fill the air,
He look'd on me, and cried in wonder, "Thou art here!"

V.

Then, suddenly, I knew it was the youth
In whom its earliest hopes my spirit found;
But envious tongues had stain'd his spotless truth,
And thoughtless pride his love in silence bound,
And shame and sorrow mine in toils had wound,
Whilst he was innocent, and I deluded;
The truth now came upon me, on the ground
Tears of repenting joy, which fast intruded,
Fell fast, and o'er its peace our mingling spirits brooded.

VI.

Thus, while with rapid lips and earnest eyes
We talk'd, a sound of sweeping conflict spread,
As from the earth did suddenly arise;
From every tent roused by that clamour dread,
Our bands outsprung and seized their arms—we sped
Towards the sound: our tribes were gathering far,
Those sanguine slaves amid ten thousand dead
Stabb'd in their sleep, trampled in treacherous war,
The gentle hearts whose power their lives had sought to spare.

VII.

Like rabid snakes, that sting some gentle child
Who brings them food, when winter false and fair
Allures them forth with its cold smiles, so wild
They rage among the camp;—they overbear
The patriot hosts—confusion, then despair
Descends like night—when « Laon!» one did cry:
Like a bright ghost from Heaven that shout did scare
The slaves, and widening through the vaulted sky,
Seem'd sent from Earth to Heaven in sign of victory.

VIII.

In sudden panic those false murderers fled,
Like insect tribes before the northern gale:
But swifter still, our hosts encompassed
Their shatter'd ranks, and in a craggy vale,
Where even their fierce despair might nought avail
Hemm'd them around!—and then revenge and fear
Made the high virtue of the patriots fail:
One pointed on his foe the mortal spear—
I rush'd before its point, and cried, « Forbear, forbear!»

IX.

The spear transfix'd my arm that was uplifted
In swift expostulation, and the blood
Gush'd round its point: I smiled, and—« Oh! thou gifted
With eloquence which shall not be withstood,
Flow thus!»—I cried in joy, « thou vital flood,
Until my heart be dry, ere thus the cause
For which thou wert aught worthy be subdued—
Ah, ye are pale,—ye weep,—your passions pause,—
'T is well! ye feel the truth of love's benignant laws.

X.

« Soldiers, our brethren and our friends are slain:
Ye murder'd them, I think, as they did sleep!
Alas, what have ye done? the slightest pain
Which ye might suffer, there were eyes to weep;
But ye have quench'd them—there were smiles to steep
Your hearts in balm, but they are lost in woe;
And those whom love did set his watch to keep
Around your tents truth's freedom to bestow,
Ye stabb'd as they did sleep—but they forgive ye now.

XI.

« O wherefore should ill ever flow from ill,
And pain still keener pain forever breed?
We all are brethren—even the slaves who kill
For hire, are men! and to avenge misdeed
On the misdoer, doth but Misery feed
With her own broken heart! O Earth, O Heaven!
And thou, dread Nature, which to every deed
And all that lives, or is, to be hath given,
Even as to thee have these done ill, and are forgiven.

XII.

« Join then your hands and hearts, and let the past
Be as a grave which gives not up its dead
To evil thoughts»—A film then overcast
My sense with dimness, for the wound, which bled
Freshly, swift shadows o'er mine eyes had shed.
When I awoke, I lay 'mid friends and foes,
And earnest countenances on me shed
The light of questioning looks, whilst one did close
My wound with balmiest herbs, and soothed me to repose.

XIII.

And one whose spear had pierced me, lean'd beside
With quivering lips and humid eyes;—and all
Seem'd like some brothers on a journey wide
Gone forth, whom now strange meeting did befall
In a strange land, round one whom they might call
Their friend, their chief, their father, for assay
Of peril, which had saved them from the thrall
Of death, now suffering. Thus the vast array
Of those fraternal bands were reconciled that day.

XIV.

Lifting the thunder of their acclamation,
Towards the City then the multitude,
And I among them, went in joy—a nation
Made free by love;—a mighty brotherhood
Link'd by a jealous interchange of good;
A glorious pageant, more magnificent
Than kingly slaves array'd in gold and blood;
When they return from carnage, and are sent
In triumph bright beneath the populous battlement.

XV.

Afar, the City walls were throng'd on high,
And myriads on each giddy turret clung,
And to each spire far lessening in the sky,
Bright pennons on the idle winds were hung;
As we approach'd a shout of joyance sprung
At once from all the crowd, as if the vast
And peopled Earth its boundless skies among
The sudden clamour of delight had cast,
When from before its face some general wreck had past.

XVI.

Our armies through the City's hundred gates
Were pour'd, like brooks which to the rocky lair
Of some deep lake, whose silence them awaits,
Throng from the mountains when the storms are there;
And as we past through the calm sunny air
A thousand flower-inwoven crowns were shed,
The token flowers of truth and freedom fair,
And fairest hands bound them on many a head,
Those angels of love's heaven, that over all was spread.

XVII.

I trod as one tranced in some rapturous vision:
Those bloody bands so lately reconciled,
Were, ever as they went, by the contrition
Of anger turn'd to love from ill beguiled,
And every one on them more gently smiled,
Because they had done evil;—the sweet awe
Of such mild looks made their own hearts grow mild,
And did with soft attraction ever draw
Their spirits to the love of freedom's equal law.

XVIII.

And they, and all, in one loud symphony
My name which Liberty, commingling, lifted
« The friend and the preserver of the free!
The parent of this joy!» and fair eyes gifted
With feelings, caught from one who had uplifted
The light of a great spirit, round me shone;
And all the shapes of this grand scenery shifted
Like restless clouds before the stedfast sun,—
Where was that Maid? I asked, but it was known of none.

XIX.

Laone was the name her love had chosen,
For she was nameless, and her birth none knew:
Where was Laone now?—the words were frozen
Within my lips with fear; but to subdue
Such dreadful hope, to my great task was due,
And when at length one brought reply, that she
To-morrow would appear, I then withdrew
To judge what need for that great throng might be,
For now the stars came thick over the twilight sea.

XX.

Yet need was none for rest or food to care,
Even though that multitude was passing great,
Since each one for the other did prepare
All kindly succour—Therefore to the gate
Of the Imperial House, now desolate,
I past, and there was found aghast, alone,
The fallen Tyrant!—silently he sate
Upon the footstool of his golden throne,
Which starred with sunny gems, in its own lustre shone.

XXI.

Alone, but for one child, who led before him
A graceful dance: the only living thing
Of all the crowd, which thither to adore him
Flock'd yesterday, who solace sought to bring
In his abandonment!—she knew the King
Had praised her dance of yore, and now she wove
Its circles, aye weeping and murmuring
'Mid her sad task of unregarded love,
That to no smiles it might his speechless sadness move.

XXII.

She fled to him, and wildly clasp'd his feet
When human steps were heard:—he moved nor spoke,
Nor changed his hue, nor raised his looks to meet
The gaze of strangers—our loud entrance woke
The echoes of the hall, which circling broke
The calm of its recesses,—like a tomb
Its sculptured walls vacantly to the stroke
Of footfalls answered, and the twilight's gloom,
Lay like a charnel's mist within the radiant dome.

XXIII.

The little child stood up when we came nigh;
Her lips and cheeks seemed very pale and wan,
But on her forehead, and within her eye
Lay beauty, which makes hearts that feed thereon
Sick with excess of sweetness; on the throne
She lean'd;—the King with gather'd brow, and lips
Wreath'd by long scorn, did inly sneer and frown
With hue like that when some great painter dips
His pencil in the gloom of earthquake and eclipse.

XXIV.

She stood beside him like a rainbow braided
Within some storm, when scarce its shadows vast
From the blue paths of the swift sun have faded;
A sweet and solemn smile, like Cythna's, east
One moment's light, which made my heart beat fast,
O'er that child's parted lips—a gleam of bliss,
A shade of vanish'd days,—as the tears past
Which wrapt it, even as with a father's kiss
I press'd those softest eyes in trembling tenderness.

XXV.

The sceptred wretch then from that solitude
I drew, and of his change compassionate,
With words of sadness soothed his rugged mood.
But he, while pride and fear held deep debate,
With sullen guile of ill-dissembled hate
Glared on me as a toothless snake might glare:
Pity, not scorn I felt, though desolate
The desolator now, and unaware
The curses which he mock'd had caught him by the hair.

XXVI.

I led him forth from that which now might seem
A gorgeous grave: through portals sculptured deep
With imagery beautiful as dream
We went, and left the shades which tend on sleep
Over its unregarded gold to keep
Their silent watch.—The child trod faintingly,
And as she went, the tears which she did weep
Glanced in the star-light; wilder'd seemed she,
And when I spake, for sobs she could not answer me.

XXVII.

At last the tyrant cried, « She hungers, slave,
Stab her, or give her bread!»—It was a tone
Such as sick fancies in a new-made grave
Might hear. I trembled, for the truth was known,
He with this child had thus been left alone,
And neither had gone forth for food,—but he
In mingled pride and awe cower'd near his throne,
And she, a nursling of captivity,
Knew nought beyond those walls, nor what such change might be.

XXVIII.

And he was troubled at a charm withdrawn
Thus suddenly; that sceptres ruled no more—
That even from gold the dreadful strength was gone,
Which once made all things subject to its power—
Such wonder seized him, as if hour by hour
The past had come again; and the swift fall
Of one so great and terrible of yore,
To desolateness, in the hearts of all
Like wonder stirr'd, who saw such awful change befal.

XXIX.

A mighty crowd, such as the wide land pours
Once in a thousand years, now gather'd round
The fallen tyrant;—like the rush of showers
Of hail in spring, pattering along the ground,
Their many footsteps fell, else came no sound
From the wide multitude: that lonely man
Then knew the burthen of his change, and found,
Concealing in the dust his visage wan,
Refuge from the keen looks which thro' his bosom ran.

XXX.

And he was faint withal: I sate beside him
Upon the earth, and took that child so fair
From his weak arms, that ill might none betide him
Or her;—when food was brought to them, her share
To his averted lips the child did bear,
But when she saw he had enough, she ate
And wept the while;—the lonely man's despair
Hunger then overcame, and of his state
Forgetful, on the dust as in a trance he sate.

XXXI.

Slowly the silence of the multitudes
Past, as when far is heard in some lone dell
The gathering of a wind among the woods—
And he is fallen! they cry, he who did dwell
Like famine or the plague, or aught more fell
Among our homes, is fallen! the murderer
Who slaked his thirsting soul as from a well
Of blood and tears with ruin! he is here!
Sunk in a gulf of scorn from which none may him rear!

XXXII.

Then was heard—He who judged let him be brought
To judgment! blood for blood cries from the soil
On which his crimes have deep pollution wrought!
Shall Othman only unavenged despoil?
Shall they who by the stress of grinding toil
Wrest from the unwilling earth his luxuries,
Perish for crime, while his foul blood may boil,
Or creep within his veins at will!—Arise!
And to high justice make her chosen sacrifice.

XXXIII.

"What do ye seek? what fear ye?" then I cried,
Suddenly starting forth, "that ye should shed
The blood of Othman—if your hearts are tried
In the true love of freedom, cease to dread
This one poor lonely man—beneath Heaven spread
In purest light above us all, through earth
Maternal earth, who doth her sweet smiles shed
For all, let him go free; until the worth
Of human nature win from these a second birth.

XXXIV.

"What call ye *justice?* is there one who ne'er
In secret thought has wish'd another's ill?—
Are ye all pure? let those stand forth who hear,
And tremble not. Shall they insult and kill,
If such they be? their mild eyes can they fill
With the false anger of the hypocrite?
Alas, such were not pure—the chasten'd will
Of virtue sees that justice is the light
Of love, and not revenge, and terror and despite."

XXXV.

The murmur of the people slowly dying,
Paused as I spake, then those who near me were,
Cast gentle looks where the lone man was lying
Shrouding his head, which now that infant fair
Clasp'd on her lap in silence;—through the air
Sobs were then heard, and many kiss'd my feet
In pity's madness, and to the despair
Of him whom late they cursed, a solace sweet
His very victims brought—soft looks and speeches meet.

XXXVI.

Then to a home for his repose assign'd,
Accompanied by the still throng he went
In silence, where to soothe his rankling mind,
Some likeness of his ancient state was lent;
And if his heart could have been innocent
As those who pardon'd him, he might have ended
His days in peace; but his straight lips were bent,
Men said, into a smile which guile portended,
A sight with which that child like hope with fear was blended.

XXXVII.

'T was midnight now, the eve of that great day
Whereon the many nations at whose call
The chains of earth like mist melted away,
Decreed to hold a sacred Festival,
A rite to attest the equality of all
Who live. So to their homes, to dream or wake
All went. The sleepless silence did recal
Laone to my thoughts, with hopes that make
The flood recede from which their thirst they seek to slake.

XXXVIII.

The dawn flow'd forth, and from its purple fountains
I drank those hopes which make the spirit quail;
As to the plain between the misty mountains
And the great City, with a countenance pale
I went:—it was a sight which might avail
To make men weep exulting tears, for whom
Now first from human power the reverend veil
Was torn, to see Earth from her general womb
Pour forth her swarming sons to a fraternal doom:

XXXIX.

To see, far glancing in the misty morning,
The signs of that innumerable host,
To hear one sound of many made, the warning
Of Earth to Heaven from its free children tost,
While the eternal hills, and the sea lost
In wavering light, and, starring the blue sky
The city's myriad spires of gold, almost
With human joy made mute society,
Its witnesses with men who must hereafter be.

XL.

To see like some vast island from the Ocean,
The Altar of the Federation rear
Its pile i' the midst; a work, which the devotion
Of millions in one night created there,
Sudden, as when the moonrise makes appear
Strange clouds in the east; a marble pyramid
Distinct with steps: that mighty shape did wear
The light of genius; its still shadow hid
Far ships: to know its height the morning mists forbid!

XLI.

To hear the restless multitudes forever
Around the base of that great Altar flow,
As on some mountain islet burst and shiver
Atlantic waves; and solemnly and slow
As the wind bore that tumult to and fro,
To feel the dreamlike music, which did swim
Like beams through floating clouds on waves below
Falling in pauses, from that Altar dim
As silver sounding tongues breathed an aërial hymn.

XLII.

To hear, to see, to live, was on that morn
Lethean joy! so that all those assembled
Cast off their memories of the past outworn;
Two only bosoms with their own life trembled,
And mine was one,—and we had both dissembled;
So with a beating heart I went, and one,
Who having much, covets yet more, resembled;
A lost and dear possession, which not won,
He walks in lonely gloom beneath the noonday sun.

XLIII.

. To the great Pyramid I came: its stair
With female quires was throng'd: the loveliest
Among the free, grouped with its sculptures rare;
As I approach'd, the morning's golden mist,
Which now the wonder-stricken breezes kist
With their cold lips, fled, and the summit shone
Like Athos seen from Samothracia, drest
In earliest light by vintagers, and one
Sate there, a female Shape upon an ivory throne.

XLIV.

A Form most like the imagined habitant
Of silver exhalations sprung from dawn,
By winds which feed on sunrise woven, to inchant
The faiths of men: all mortal eyes were drawn,
As famish'd mariners through strange seas gone
Gaze on a burning watch-tower, by the light
Of those divinest lineaments—alone
With thoughts which none could share, from that fair sight
I turn'd in sickness, for a veil shrouded her countenance bright.

XLV.

And, neither did I hear the acclamations,
Which from brief silence bursting, fill'd the air
With her strange name and mine, from all the nations
Which we, they said, in strength had gather'd there
From the sleep of bondage; nor the vision fair
Of that bright pageantry beheld,—but blind
And silent, as a breathing corpse did fare,
Leaning upon my friend, till like a wind
To fever'd cheeks, a voice flow'd o'er my troubled mind.

XLVI.

Like music of some minstrel heavenly gifted,
To one whom fiends inthrall, this voice to me;
Scarce did I wish her veil to be uplifted,
I was so calm and joyous.—I could see
The platform where we stood, the statues three
Which kept their marble watch on that high shrine,
The multitudes, the mountains, and the sea;
As when eclipse hath past, things sudden shine
To men's astonish'd eyes most clear and crystalline.

XLVII.

At first Laone spoke most tremulously:
But soon her voice the calmness which it shed
Gather'd, and—« Thou art whom I sought to see,
And thou art our first votary here,» she said:
« I had a dear friend once, but he is dead!—
And of all those on the wide earth who breathe,
Thou dost resemble him alone—I spread
This veil between us two, that thou beneath
Shouldst image one who may have been long lost in death.

XLVIII.

« For this wilt thou not henceforth pardon me?
Yes, but those joys which silence well requite
Forbid reply;—why men have chosen me,
To be the Priestess of this holiest rite
I scarcely know, but that the floods of light
Which flow over the world, have borne me hither
To meet thee, long most dear; and now unite
Thine hand with mine, and may all comfort wither
From both the hearts whose pulse in joy now beat together.

XLIX.

If our own will as others' law we bind,
If the foul worship trampled here we fear;
If as ourselves we cease to love our kind!»—
She paused, and pointed upwards—sculptured there
Three shapes around her ivory throne appear;
One was a Giant, like a child asleep
On a loose rock, whose grasp crush'd, as it were
In dream, sceptres and crowns; and one did keep
Its watchful eyes in doubt whether to smile or weep;

L.

A Woman sitting on the sculptured disk
Of the broad earth, and feeding from one breast
A human babe and a young basilisk;
Her looks were sweet as Heaven's when loveliest
In Autumn eves.—The third Image was drest
In white wings swift as clouds in winter skies,
Beneath his feet, 'mongst ghastliest forms, repress
Lay Faith, an obscene worm, who sought to rise,
While calmly on the Sun he turn'd his diamond eyes.

LI.

Beside that Image then I sate, while she
Stood, 'mid the throngs which ever ebb'd and flow'd
Like light amid the shadows of the sea
Cast from one cloudless star, and on the crowd
That touch which none who feels forgets, bestow'd;
And whilst the sun return'd the stedfast gaze
Of the great Image as o'er Heaven it glode,
That rite had place; it ceased when sunset's blaze
Burn'd o'er the isles; all stood in joy and deep amaze.

When in the silence of all spirits there
Laone's voice was felt, and through the air
Her thrilling gestures spoke, most eloquently fair.

1.

« Calm art thou as yon sunset! swift and strong
As new-fledged Eagles, beautiful and young,
That float among the blinding beams of morning;
And underneath thy feet writhe Faith, and Folly,
Custom, and Hell, and mortal Melancholy—
Hark! the Earth starts to hear the mighty warning
Of thy voice sublime and holy;
Its free spirits here assembled,
See thee, feel thee, know thee now,—
To thy voice their hearts have trembled,
Like ten thousand clouds which flow
With one wide wind as it flies!
Wisdom! thy irresistible children rise
To hail thee, and the elements they chain
And their own will to swell the glory of thy train.

2.

« O Spirit vast and deep as Night and Heaven !
Mother and soul of all to which is given
The light of life, the loveliness of being,
Lo! thou dost re-ascend the human heart,
Thy throne of power, almighty as thou wert,
In dreams of Poets old grown pale by seeing
The shade of thee:—now, millions start
To feel thy lightnings through them burning:
Nature, or God, or Love, or Pleasure,
Or Sympathy the sad tears turning
To mutual smiles, a drainless treasure,
Descends amidst us;—Scorn and Hate,
Revenge and Selfishness are desolate—
A hundred nations swear that there shall be
Pity and Peace and Love, among the good and free!

3.

« Eldest of things, divine Equality!
Wisdom and Love are but the slaves of thee,
The Angels of thy sway, the poor around thee
Treasures from all the cells of human thought,
And from the Stars, and from the Ocean brought,
And the last living heart whose beatings bound thee:
The powerful and the wise had sought
Thy coming, thou in light descending
O'er the wide land which is thine own
Like the spring whose breath is blending
All blasts of fragrance into one,
Comest upon the paths of men !—
Earth bares her general bosom to thy ken,
And all her children here in glory meet
To feed upon thy smiles, and clasp thy sacred feet.

4.

« My brethren, we are free! the plains and mountains
The grey sea-shore, the forests and the fountains,
Are haunts of happiest dwellers;—man and woman,
Their common bondage burst, may freely borrow
From lawless love a solace for their sorrow;
For oft we still must weep, since we are human.
A stormy night's sereenest morrow,
Whose showers are pity's gentle tears,
Whose clouds are smiles of those that die
Like infants without hopes or fears,
And whose beams are joys that lie
In blended hearts, now holds dominion;
The dawn of mind, which upwards on a pinion
Borne, swift as sun-rise, far illumines space,
And clasps this barren world in its own bright embrace!

5.

« My brethren, we are free! the fruits are glowing
Beneath the stars, and the night-winds are flowing
O'er the ripe corn, the birds and beasts are dreaming—
Never again may blood of bird or beast
Stain with its venomous stream a human feast,
To the pure skies in accusation steaming,
Avenging poisons shall have ceased
To feed disease and fear and madness,
The dwellers of the earth and air
Shall throng around our steps with gladness
Seeking their food or refuge there.
Our toil from thought all glorious forms shall cull,
To make this Earth, our home, more beautiful,
And Science, and her sister Poesy,
Shall clothe in light the fields and cities of the free!

6.

« Victory, Victory to the prostrate nations!
Bear witness Night, and ye mute Constellations
Who gaze on us from your crystalline cars!
Thoughts have gone forth whose powers can sleep no more!
Victory! Victory! Earth's remotest shore,
Regions which groan beneath the Antarctic stars,
The green lands cradled in the roar
Of western waves, and wildernesses
Peopled and vast, which skirt the oceans
Where morning dyes her golden tresses,
Shall soon partake our high emotions:
Kings shall turn pale! Almighty Fear,
The Fiend-God, when our charmed name he hear,
Shall fade like shadow from his thousand fanes,
While Truth with Joy enthroned o'er his lost empire reigns!»

LII.

Ere she had ceased, the mists of night intwining
Their dim woof, floated o'er the infinite throng;
She, like a spirit through the darkness shining,
In tones whose sweetness silence did prolong,
As if to lingering winds they did belong,
Pour'd forth her inmost soul: a passionate speech
With wild and thrilling pauses woven among,
Which whoso heard, was mute, for it could teach
To rapture like her own all listening hearts to reach.

LIII.

Her voice was as a mountain stream which sweeps
The wither'd leaves of Autumn to the lake,
And in some deep and narrow bay then sleeps
In the shadow of the shores; as dead leaves wake
Under the wave, in flowers and herbs which make
Those green depths beautiful when skies are blue,
The multitude so moveless did partake
Such living change, and kindling murmurs flew
As o'er that speechless calm delight and wonder grew.

LIV.

Over the plain the throngs were scatter'd then
In groups around the fires, which from the sea
Even to the gorge of the first mountain glen
Blazed wide and far: the banquet of the free
Was spread beneath many a dark cypress tree,
Beneath whose spires, which sway'd in the red light,
Reclining as they ate, of Liberty,
And Hope, and Justice, and Laone's name,
Earth's children did a woof of happy converse frame.

LV.

Their feast was such as Earth, the general mother,
Pours from her fairest bosom, when she smiles
In the embrace of Autumn;—to each other
As when some parent fondly reconciles
Her warring children, she their wrath beguiles
With her own sustenance; they relenting weep:
Such was this Festival, which from their isles
And continents, and winds, and oceans deep,
All shapes might throng to share, that fly, or walk, or creep.

LVI.

Might share in peace and innocence, for gore
Or poison none this festal did pollute,
But piled on high, an overflowing store
Of pomegranates, and citrons, fairest fruit,
Melons, and dates, and figs, and many a root
Sweet and sustaining, and bright grapes ere yet
Accursed fire their mild juice could transmute
Into a mortal bane, and brown corn set
In baskets; with pure streams their thirsting lips they wet.

LVII.

Laone had descended from the shrine,
And every deepest look and holiest mind
Fed on her form, though now those tones divine
Were silent as she past; she did unwind
Her veil, as with the crowds of her own kind
She mix'd; some impulse made my heart refrain
From seeking her that night, so I reclined
Amidst a group, where on the utmost plain
A festal watch-fire burn'd beside the dusky main.

LVIII.

And joyous was our feast; pathetic talk,
And wit, and harmony of choral strains,
While far Orion o'er the waves did walk
That flow among the isles, held us in chains
Of sweet captivity, which none disdains
Who feels: but when his zone grew dim in mist
Which clothes the Ocean's bosom, o'er the plains
The multitudes went homeward, to their rest,
Which that delightful day with its own shadow blest.

CANTO VI.

I.

Beside the dimness of the glimmering sea,
Weaving swift language from impassion'd themes,
With that dear friend I linger'd, who to me
So late had been restored, beneath the gleams
Of the silver stars; and ever in soft dreams
Of future love and peace sweet converse lapt
Our willing fancies, till the pallid beams,
Of the last watch-fire fell, and darkness wrapt
The waves, and each bright chain of floating fire was snapt.

II.

And till we came even to the City's wall
And the great gate, then, none knew whence or why,
Disquiet on the multitudes did fall:
And first, one pale and breathless past us by,
And stared and spoke not;—then with piercing cry
A troop of wild-eyed women, by the shrieks
Of their own terror driven,—tumultuously
Hither and thither hurrying with pale cheeks,
Each one from fear unknown a sudden refuge seeks—

III.

Then, rallying cries of treason and of danger
Resounded: and—« They come! to arms! to arms!
The Tyrant is amongst us, and the stranger
Comes to enslave us in his name! to arms!»
In vain: for Panic, the pale fiend who charms
Strength to forswear her right, those millions swept
Like waves before the tempest—these alarms
Came to me, as to know their cause I leapt
On the gate's turret, and in rage and grief and scorn I wept!

IV.

For to the North I saw the town on fire,
And its red light made morning pallid now,
Which burst over wide Asia;—louder, higher,
The yells of victory and the screams of woe
I heard approach, and saw the throng below
Stream through the gates like foam-wrought waterfalls
Fed from a thousand storms—the fearful glow
Of bombs flares overhead—at intervals
The red artillery's bolt mangling among them falls.

V.

And now the horsemen come—and all was done
Swifter than I have spoken—I beheld
Their red swords flash in the uprisen sun.
I rush'd among the rout to have repell'd
That miserable flight—one moment quell'd
By voice, and looks and eloquent despair,
As if reproach from their own hearts withheld
Their steps, they stood; but soon came pouring there
New multitudes, and did those rallied bands o'erbear.

VI.

I strove, as drifted on some cataract
By irresistible streams, some wretch might strive
Who hears its fatal roar:—the files compact
Whelm'd me, and from the gate avail'd to drive
With quickening impulse, as each bolt did rive
Their ranks with bloodier chasm:—into the plain
Disgorged at length the dead and the alive,
In one dread mass, were parted, and the stain
Of blood from mortal steel fell o'er the fields like rain.

VII.

For now the despot's blood-hounds with their prey,
Unarm'd and unaware, were gorging deep
Their gluttony of death; the loose array
Of horsemen o'er the wide fields murdering sweep,
And with loud laughter for their tyrant reap
A harvest sown with other hopes; the while,
Far overhead, ships from Propontis keep
A killing rain of fire:—when the waves smile
As sudden earthquakes light many a volcano isle.

VIII.

Thus sudden, unexpected feast was spread
For the carrion fowls of Heaven.—I saw the sight—
I moved—I lived—as o'er the heaps of dead,
Whose stony eyes glared in the morning light,
I trod;—to me there came no thought of flight,
But with loud cries of scorn which whoso heard
That dreaded death, felt in his veins the might
Of virtuous shame return, the crowd I stirr'd,
And desperation's hope in many hearts recurr'd.

IX.

A band of brothers gathering round me, made,
Although unarm'd, a stedfast front, and still
Retreating, with stern looks beneath the shade
Of gather'd eyebrows, did the victors fill
With doubt even in success; deliberate will
Inspired our growing troop, not overthrown
It gain'd the shelter of a grassy hill,
And ever still our comrades were hewn down,
And their defenceless limbs beneath our footsteps strown.

X.

Immoveably we stood—in joy I found,
Beside me then, firm as a giant pine
Among the mountain vapours driven around,
The old man whom I loved—his eyes divine
With a mild look of courage answered mine,
And my young friend was near, and ardently
His hand grasp'd mine a moment—now the line
Of war extended, to our rallying cry
As myriads flocked in love and brotherhood to die.

XI.

For ever while the sun was climbing Heaven
The horsemen hewed our unarmed myriads down
Safely, though when by thirst of carnage driven
Too near, those slaves were swiftly overthrown
By hundreds leaping on them:—flesh and bone
Soon made our ghastly ramparts; then the shaft
Of the artillery from the sea was thrown
More fast and fiery, and the conquerors laugh'd
In pride to hear the wind our screams of torment waft.

XII.

For on one side alone the hill gave shelter,
So vast that phalanx of unconquer'd men,
And there the living in the blood did welter
Of the dead and dying, which, in that green glen
Like stifled torrents, made a plashy fen
Under the feet—thus was the butchery waged
While the sun climb Heaven's eastern steep—but when
It 'gan to sink—a fiercer combat raged,
For in more doubtful strife the armies were engaged.

XIII.

Within a cave upon the hill were found
A bundle of rude pikes, the instrument
Of those who war but on their native ground
For natural rights: a shout of joyance sent
Even from our hearts the wide air pierced and rent,
As those few arms the bravest and the best
Seized; and each sixth, thus armed, did now present
A line which cover'd and sustain'd the rest,
A confident phalanx, which the foes on every side invest.

XIV.

That onset turned the foes to flight almost;
But soon they saw their present strength, and knew
That coming night would to our resolute host
Bring victory, so dismounting close they drew
Their glittering files, and then the combat grew
Unequal but most horrible;—and ever
Our myriads, whom the swift bolt overthrew,
Or the red sword, fail'd like a mountain river
Which rushes forth in foam to sink in sands forever.

XV.

Sorrow and shame, to see with their own kind
Our human brethren mix, like beasts of blood
To mutual ruin armed by one behind
Who sits and scoffs!—That friend so mild and good,
Who like its shadow near my youth had stood,
Was stabbed!—my old preserver's hoary hair,
With the flesh clinging to its roots, was strew'd
Under my feet!—I lost all sense or care,
And like the rest I grew desperate and unaware.

XVI.

The battle became ghastlier—in the midst
I paused, and saw, how ugly and how fell,
O Hate! thou art, even when thy life thou shedd'st
For love. The ground in many a little dell
Was broken, up and down whose steeps befell
Alternate victory and defeat, and there
The combatants with rage most horrible
Strove, and their eyes started with cracking stare,
And impotent their tongues they lolled into the air.

XVII.

Flaccid and foamy, like a mad dog's hanging;
Want, and Moon-madness, and the Pest's swift bane;
When its shafts smite—while yet its bow is twanging—
Have each their mark and sign—some ghastly stain;
And this was thine, O War! of hate and pain
Thou loathed slave. I saw all shapes of death
And minister'd to many, o'er the plain
While carnage in the sun-beam's warmth did seethe,
Till twilight o'er the east wove her serenest wreath.

XVIII.

The few who yet survived, resolute and firm
Around me fought. At the decline of day
Winding above the mountain's snowy term
New banners shone: they quiver'd in the ray
Of the sun's unseen orb—ere night the array
Of fresh troops hemm'd us in—of those brave bands
I soon survived alone—and now I lay
Vanquish'd and faint, the grasp of bloody hands
I felt, and saw on high the glare of falling brands:

XIX.

When on my foes a sudden terror came,
And they fled, scattering—lo! with reinless speed
A black Tartarian horse of giant frame
Comes trampling o'er the dead, the living bleed
Beneath the hoofs of that tremendous steed,
On which, like to an Angel, robed in white,
Sate one waving a sword;—the hosts recede
And fly, as through their ranks with awful might,
Sweeps in the shadow of eve that Phantom swift and bright;

XX.

And its path made a solitude.—I rose
And mark'd its coming: it relaxed its course
As it approach'd me, and the wind that flows
Through night, bore accents to mine ear whose force
Might create smiles in death—the Tartar horse
Paused, and I saw the shape its might which sway'd,
And heard her musical pants, like the sweet source
Of waters in the desert, as she said,
« Mount with me Laon, now»—I rapidly obey'd.

XXI.

Then: « away! away!» she cried, and stretched her sword
As 't were a scourge over the courser's head,
And lightly shook the reins:—We spake no word
But like the vapour of the tempest fled
Over the plain; her dark hair was dispread
Like the pine's locks upon the lingering blast;
Over mine eyes its shadowy strings it spread,
Fitfully, and the hills and streams fled fast,
As o'er their glimmering forms the steed's broad shadow past.

XXII.

And his hoofs ground the rocks to fire and dust,
His strong sides made the torrents rise in spray,
And turbulence, as of a whirlwind's gust
Surrounded us;—and still away! away!
Through the desert night we sped, while she alway
Gazed on a mountain which we near'd, whose crest
Crown'd with a marble ruin, in the ray
Of the obscure stars gleam'd;—its rugged breast
The steed strain'd up, and then his impulse did arrest.

XXIII.

A rocky hill which overhung the Ocean:—
From that lone ruin, when the steed that panted
Paused, might be heard the murmur of the motion
Of waters, as in spots forever haunted
By the choicest winds of Heaven, which are enchanted
To music, by the wand of Solitude,
That wizard wild, and the far tents implanted
Upon the plain, be seen by those who stood
Thence marking the dark shore of Ocean's curved flood:

XXIV.

One moment these were heard and seen—another
Past; and the two who stood beneath that night,
Each only heard, or saw, or felt the other;
As from the lofty steed she did alight,
Cythna (for, from the eyes whose deepest light
Of love and sadness made my lips feel pale
With influence strange of mournfullest delight,
My own sweet Cythna looked), with joy did quail,
And felt her strength in tears of human weakness fail.

XXV.

And, for a space in my embrace she rested,
Her head on my unquiet heart reposing,
While my faint arms her languid frame invested:
At length she looked on me, and half unclosing
Her tremulous lips, said: « Friend, thy bands were losing
The battle, as I stood before the King
In bonds.—I burst them then, and swiftly chusing
The time, did seize a Tartar's sword, and spring
Upon his horse, and swift as on the whirlwind's wing,

XXVI.

« Have thou and I been borne beyond pursuer,
And we are here.»—Then turning to the steed,
She press'd the white moon on his front with pure
And rose-like lips, and many a fragrant weed
From the green ruin pluck'd, that he might feed;—
But I to a stone seat that Maiden led,
And kissing her fair eyes, said, « Thou hast need
Of rest,» and I heap'd up the courser's bed
In a green mossy nook, with mountain flowers dispread.

XXVII.

Within that ruin, where a shatter'd portal
Looks to the eastern stars, abandoned now
By man, to be the home of things immortal,
Memories, like awful ghosts which come and go,
And must inherit all he builds below,
When he is gone, a hall stood; o'er whose roof
Fair clinging weeds with ivy pale did grow,
Clasping its grey rents with a verdurous woof,
A hanging dome of leaves, a canopy moon-proof.

XXVIII.

The autumnal winds, as if spell-bound, had made
A natural couch of leaves in that recess,
Which seasons none disturb'd, but in the shade
Of flowering parasites, did spring love to dress
With their sweet blooms the wintry loneliness
Of those dead leaves, shedding their stars, whene'er
The wandering wind her nurslings might caress;
Whose intertwining fingers ever there,
Made music wild and soft that filled the listening air.

XXIX.

We know not where we go, or what sweet dream
May pilot us through caverns strange and fair
Of far and pathless passion, while the stream
Of life our bark doth on its whirlpools bear,
Spreading swift wings as sails to the dim air;
Nor should we seek to know, so the devotion
Of love and gentle thoughts be heard still there
Louder and louder from the utmost Ocean
Of universal life, attuning its commotion.

XXX.

To the pure all things are pure! Oblivion wrapt
Our spirits, and the fearful overthrow
Of public hope was from our being snapt,
Though linked years had bound it there; for now
A power, a thirst, a knowledge, which below
All thoughts, like light beyond the atmosphere,
Clothing its clouds with grace, doth ever flow,
Came on us, as we sate in silence there,
Beneath the golden stars of the clear azure air.

XXXI.

In silence which doth follow talk that causes
The baffled heart to speak with sighs and tears,
When wildering passion swalloweth up the pauses
Of inexpressive speech:—the youthful years
Which we together past, their hopes and fears,
The blood itself which ran within our frames,
That likeness of the features which endears
The thoughts expressed by them, our very names,
And all the winged hours which speechless memory claims,

XXXII.

Had found a voice:—and ere that voice did pass,
The night grew damp and dim, and through a rent
Of the ruin where we sate, from the morass,
A wandering Meteor by some wild wind sent,
Hung high in the green dome, to which it lent
A faint and pallid lustre; while the song
Of blasts, in which its blue hair quivering bent,
Strew'd strangest sounds the moving leaves among;
A wondrous light, the sound as of a spirit's tongue.

XXXIII.

The Meteor showed the leaves on which we sate,
And Cythna's glowing arms, and the thick ties
Of her soft hair, which bent with gathered weight
My neck near hers, her dark and deepening eyes,
Which, as twin phantoms of one star that lies
O'er a dim well, move, though the star reposes,
Swam in our mute and liquid ecstacies,
Her marble brow, and eager lips, like roses,
With their own fragrance pale, which spring but half uncloses.

XXXIV.

The meteor to its far morass return'd:
The beating of our veins one interval
Made still; and then I felt the blood that burn'd
Within her frame, mingle with mine, and fall
Arouud my heart like fire; and over all
A mist was spread, the sickness of a deep
And speechless swoon of joy, as might befall
Two disunited spirits when they leap
In union from this earth's obscure and fading sleep.

XXXV.

Was it one moment that confounded thus
All thought, all sense, all feeling, into one
Unutterable power, which shielded us
Even from our own cold looks, when we had gone
Into a wide and wild oblivion
Of tumult and of tenderness? or now
Had ages, such as make the moon and sun,
The seasons, and mankind their changes know,
Left fear and time unfelt by us alone below?

XXXVI.

I know not. What are kisses whose fire clasps
The failing heart in languishment, or limb
Twined within limb? or the quick dying gasps
Of the life meeting, when the faint eyes swim
Through tears of a wide mist boundless and dim,
In one caress? What is the strong control
Which leads the heart that dizzy steep to climb,
Where far over the world those vapours roll,
Which blend two restless frames in one reposing soul?

XXXVII.

It is the shadow which doth float unseen,
But not unfelt, o'er blind mortality,
Whose divine darkness fled not, from that green
And lone recess, where lapt in peace did lie
Our linked frames; till, from the changing sky,
That night and still another day had fled;
And then I saw and felt. The moon was high,
And clouds, as of a coming storm, were spread
Under its orb,—loud winds were gathering overhead.

XXXVIII.

Cythna's sweet lips seemed lurid in the moon,
Her fairest limbs with the night wind were chill,
And her dark tresses were all loosely strewn
O'er her pale bosom:—all within was still,
And the sweet peace of joy did almost fill
The depth of her unfathomable look;—
And we sate calmly, though that rocky hill,
The waves contending in its caverns strook,
For they foreknew the storm, and the grey ruin shook.

XXXIX.

There we unheeding sate, in the communion
Of interchanged vows, which, with a rite
Of faith most sweet and sacred, stamp'd our union.—
Few were the living hearts which could unite
Like ours, or celebrate a bridal night
With such close sympathies, for they had sprung
From linked youth, and from the gentle might
Of earliest love, delayed and cherish'd long,
Which common hopes and fears made, like a tempest, strong.

XL.

And such is Nature's law divine, that those
Who grow together cannot chuse but love,
If faith or custom do not interpose,
Or common slavery mar what else might move
All gentlest thoughts; as in the sacred grove
Which shades the springs of Æthiopian Nile,
That living tree, which, if the arrowy dove
Strike with her shadow, shrinks in fear awhile,
But its own kindred leaves clasps while the sun-beams smile;

XLI.

And clings to them, when darkness may dissever
The close caresses of all duller plants
Which bloom on the wide earth—thus we forever
Were link'd, for love had nurst us in the haunts
Where knowledge, from its secret source enchants
Young hearts with the fresh music of its springing,
Ere yet its gather'd flood feeds human wants,
As the great Nile feeds Egypt; ever flinging
Light on the woven boughs which o'er its waves are swinging.

XLII.

The tones of Cythna's voice like echoes were
Of those far murmuring streams; they rose and fell,
Mix'd with mine own in the tempestuous air,—
And so we sate, until our talk befel
Of the late ruin, swift and horrible,
And how those seeds of hope might yet be sown,
Whose fruit is evil's mortal poison: well,
For us, this ruin made a watch-tower lone,
But Cythna's eyes looked faint, and now two days were gone

XLIII.

Since she had food:—therefore I did awaken
The Tartar steed, who, from his ebon mane,
Soon as the clinging slumbers he had shaken,
Bent his thin head to seek the brazen rein,
Following me obediently; with pain
Of heart, so deep and dread, that one caress,
When lips and heart refuse to part again,
Till they have told their fill, could scarce express
The anguish of her mute and fearful tenderness.

XLIV.

Cythna beheld me part, as I bestrode
That willing steed—the tempest and the night,
Which gave my path its safety as I rode
Down the ravine of rocks, did soon unite,
The darkness and the tumult of their might
Borne on all winds.—Far through the streaming rain
Floating at intervals the garments white
Of Cythna gleam'd, and her voice once again
Came to me on the gust, and soon I reach'd the plain.

XLV.

I dreaded not the tempest, nor did he
Who bore me, but his eyeballs wide and red
Turn'd on the lightning's cleft exultingly;
And when the earth beneath his tameless tread,
Shook with the sullen thunder, he would spread
His nostrils to the blast, and joyously
Mock the fierce peal with neighings;—thus we sped
O'er the lit plain, and soon I could descry
Where Death and Fire had gorged the spoil of victory.

XLVI.

There was a desolate village in a wood,
Whose bloom-inwoven leaves now scattering fed
The hungry storm; it was a place of blood,
A heap of hearthless walls;—the flames were dead
Within those dwellings now,—the life had fled
From all those corpses now,—but the wide sky
Flooded with lightning was ribb'd overhead
By the black rafters, and around did lie
Women, and babes, and men, slaughter'd confusedly.

XLVII.

Beside the fountain in the market-place
Dismounting, I beheld those corpses stare
With horny eyes upon each other's face,
And on the earth and on the vacant air,
And upon me, close to the waters where
I stoop'd to slake my thirst;—I shrank to taste,
For the salt bitterness of blood was there;
But tied the steed beside, and sought in haste
If any yet survived amid that ghastly waste.

XLVIII.

No living thing was there beside one woman,
Whom I found wandering in the streets, and she
Was wither'd from a likeness of aught human
Into a fiend, by some strange misery:
Soon as she heard my steps she leap'd on me,
And glued her burning lips to mine, and laugh'd
With a loud, long, and frantic laugh of glee,
And cried, « Now Mortal, thou hast deeply quaff'd
The Plague's blue kisses—soon millions shall pledge the draught!

XLIX.

« My name is Pestilence—this bosom dry,
Once fed two babes—a sister and a brother—
When I came home, one in the blood did lie
Of three death-wounds—the flames had ate the other!
Since then I have no longer been a mother,
But I am Pestilence;—hither and thither
I flit about, that I may slay and smother;—
All lips which I have kiss'd must surely wither,
But Death's—if thou art he, we 'll go to work together!

L.

« What seek'st thou here? the moonlight comes in flashes,—
The dew is rising dankly from the dell—
'T will moisten her! and thou shalt see the gashes
In my sweet boy, now full of worms—but tell
First what thou seek'st.»—« I seek for food.»—« 'T is well,
Thou shalt have food; Famine, my paramour,
Waits for us at the feast—cruel and fell
Is Famine, but he drives not from his door
Those whom these lips have kiss'd, alone. No more, no more!»

LI.

As thus she spake, she grasp'd me with the strength
Of madness, and by many a ruin'd hearth
She led, and over many a corpse:—at length
We came to a lone hut, where on the earth
Which made its floor, she in her ghastly mirth
Gathering from all those homes now desolate,
Had piled three heaps of loaves, making a dearth
Among the dead—round which she set in state
A ring of cold, stiff babes; silent and stark they sate.

LII.

She leap'd upon a pile, and lifted high
Her mad looks to the lightning and cried: « Eat!
Share the great feast—to-morrow we must die!»
And then she spurn'd the loaves with her pale feet,
Towards her bloodless guests;—that sight to meet,
Mine eyes and my heart ached, and but that she
Who loved me, did with absent looks defeat
Despair, I might have raved in sympathy;
But now I took the food that woman offered me;

LIII.

And vainly having with her madness striven
If I might win her to return with me,
Departed. In the eastern beams of Heaven
The lightning now grew pallid—rapidly,
As by the shore of the tempestuous sea
The dark steed bore me, and the mountain grey
Soon echoed to his hoofs, and I could see
Cythna among the rocks, where she alway
Had sate, with anxious eyes fix'd on the lingering day.

LIV.

And joy was ours to meet: she was most pale,
Famished, and wet and weary, so I cast
My arms around her, lest her steps should fail
As to our home we went, and thus embraced,
Her full heart seemed a deeper joy to taste
Than e'er the prosperous know; the steed behind
Trod peacefully along the mountain waste,
We reached our home ere morning could unbind
Night's latest veil, and on our bridal couch reclined.

LV.

Her chill'd heart having cherish'd in my bosom,
And sweetest kisses past, we two did share
Our peaceful meal:—as an autumnal blossom
Which spreads its shrunk leaves in the sunny air,
After cold showers, like rainbows woven there,
Thus in her lips and cheeks the vital spirit
Mantled, and in her eyes, an atmosphere
Of health, and hope; and sorrow languish'd near it,
And fear, and all that dark despondence doth inherit.

CANTO VII.

I.

So we sate joyous as the morning ray
Which fed upon the wrecks of night and storm
Now lingering on the winds; light airs did play
Among the dewy weeds, the sun was warm,
And we sate linked in the inwoven charm
Of converse and caresses sweet and deep,
Speechless caresses, talk that might disarm
Time, though he wield the darts of death and sleep,
And those thrice mortal barbs in his own poison steep.

II.

I told her of my sufferings and my madness,
And how, awaken'd from that dreamy mood
By Liberty's uprise, the strength of gladness
Came to my spirit in my solitude;
And all that now I was, while tears pursued
Each other down her fair and listening cheek
Fast as the thoughts which fed them, like a flood
From sunbright dales; and when I ceased to speak,
Her accents soft and sweet the pausing air did wake.

III.

She told me a strange tale of strange endurance,
Like broken memories of many a heart
Woven into one; to which no firm assurance,
So wild were they, could her own faith impart.
She said that not a tear did dare to start
From the swoln brain, and that her thoughts were firm
When from all mortal hope she did depart,
Borne by those slaves across the Ocean's term,
And that she reach'd the port without one fear infirm.

IV.

One was she among many there, the thralls
Of the cold Tyrant's cruel lust: and they
Laugh'd mournfully in those polluted halls;
But she was calm and sad, musing alway
On loftiest enterprise, till on a day
The Tyrant heard her singing to her lute
A wild, and sad, and spirit-thrilling lay,
Like winds that die in wastes—one moment mute
The evil thoughts it made, which did his breast pollute.

V.

Even when he saw her wonderous loveliness,
One moment to great Nature's sacred power
He bent, and was no longer passionless;
But when he bade her to his secret bower
Be borne a loveless victim, and she tore
Her locks in agony, and her words of flame
And mightier looks avail'd not; then he bore
Again his load of slavery, and became
A king, a heartless beast, a pageant and a name.

VI.

She told me what a loathsome agony
Is that when selfishness mocks love's delight,
Foul as in dreams most fearful imagery
To dally with the mowing dead—that night
All torture, fear, or horror made seem light
Which the soul dreams or knows, and when the day
Shone on her awful frenzy, from the sight
Where like a Spirit in fleshly chains she lay
Struggling, aghast and pale the Tyrant fled away.

VII.

Her madness was a beam of light, a power
Which dawn'd through the rent soul; and words it gave,
Gestures and looks, such as in whirlwinds bore
Which might not be withstood, whence none could save
All who approach'd their sphere, like some calm wave
Vex'd into whirlpools by the chasms beneath;
And sympathy made each attendant slave
Fearless and free, and they began to breathe
Deep curses, like the voice of flames far underneath.

VIII.

The King felt pale upon his noon-day throne:
At night two slaves he to her chamber sent,
One was a green and wrinkled eunuch, grown
From human shape into an instrument
Of all things ill—distorted, bow'd and bent.
The other was a wretch from infancy
Made dumb by poison; who nought knew or meant
But to obey: from the fire-isles came he,
A diver lean and strong, of Oman's coral sea.

IX.

They bore her to a bark, and the swift stroke
Of silent rowers clove the blue moonlight seas,
Until upon their path the morning broke;
They anchor'd then, where, be there calm or breeze,
The gloomiest of the drear Symplegades
Shakes with the sleepless surge;—the Æthiop there
Wound his long arms around her, and with knees
Like iron clasp'd her feet, and plunged with her
Among the closing waves out of the boundless air.

X.

« Swift as an eagle stooping from the plain
Of morning light, into some shadowy wood,
He plunged through the green silence of the main,
Through many a cavern which the eternal flood
Had scoop'd, as dark lairs for its monster brood;
And among mighty shapes which fled in wonder,
And among mightier shadows which pursued
His heels, he wound: until the dark rocks under
He touch'd a golden chain—a sound arose like thunder.

XI.

« A stunning clang of massive bolts redoubling
Beneath the deep—a burst of waters driven
As from the roots of the sea, raging and bubbling:
And in that roof of crags a space was riven
Thro' which there shone the emerald beams of heaven,
Shot through the lines of many waves inwoven,
Like sunlight through acacia woods at even,
Through which, his way the diver having cloven,
Past like a spark sent up out of a burning oven.

XII.

« And then,» she said, « he laid me in a cave
Above the waters, by that chasm of sea,
A fountain round and vast, in which the wave
Imprison'd, boil'd and leap'd perpetually,
Down which, one moment resting, he did flee,
Winning the adverse depth; that spacious cell
Like an upaithric temple wide and high,
Whose aery dome is inaccessible,
Was pierced with one round cleft through which the sun-beams fell.

XIII.

« Below, the fountain's brink was richly paven
With the deep's wealth, coral, and pearl, and sand
Like spangling gold, and purple shells engraven
With mystic legends by no mortal hand,
Left there, when thronging to the moon's command,
The gathering waves rent the Hesperian gate
Of mountains, and on such bright floor did stand
Columns, and shapes like statues, and the state
Of kingless thrones, which Earth did in her heart create.

XIV.

« The fiend of madness which had made its prey
Of my poor heart, was lull'd to sleep awhile:
There was an interval of many a day,
And a sea-eagle brought me food the while,
Whose nest was built in that untrodden isle,
And who, to be the jailor had been taught,
Of that strange dungeon; as a friend whose smile
Like light and rest at morn and even is sought,
That wild bird was to me, till madness misery brought.

XV.

« The misery of a madness slow and creeping,
Which made the earth seem fire, the sea seem air,
And the white clouds of noon which oft were sleeping,
In the blue heaven so beautiful and fair,
Like hosts of ghastly shadows hovering there;
And the sea-eagle look'd a fiend, who bore
Thy mangled limbs for food!—thus all things were
Transform'd into the agony which I wore
Even as a poison'd robe around my bosom's core.

XVI.

« Again I knew the day and night fast fleeing,
The eagle, and the fountain, and the air;
Another frenzy came—there seem'd a being
Within me—a strange load my heart did bear,
As if some living thing had made its lair
Even in the fountains of my life:—a long
And wondrous vision wrought from my despair,
Then grew, like sweet reality among
Dim visionary woes, an unreposing throng.

XVII.

« Methought I was about to be a mother—
Month after month went by, and still I dream'd
That we should soon be all to one another,
I and my child; and still new pulses seem'd
To beat beside my heart, and still I deem'd
There was a babe within—and when the rain
Of winter through the rifted cavern streamed,
Methought, after a lapse of lingering pain,
I saw that lovely shape, which near my heart had lain.

XVIII.

« It was a babe, beautiful from its birth.—
It was like thee, dear love! its eyes were thine.
Its brow, its lips, and so upon the earth
It laid its fingers, as now rest on mine
Thine own beloved:—'t was a dream divine;
Even to remember how it fled, how swift,
How utterly, might make the heart repine,—
Though 't was a dream.»—Then Cythna did uplift
Her looks on mine, as if some doubt she sought to shift:

XIX.

A doubt which would not flee, a tenderness
Of questioning grief, a source of thronging tears;
Which, having past, as one whom sobs opprest,
She spoke: « Yes, in the wilderness of years
Her memory, aye, like a green home appears,
She suck'd her fill even at this breast, sweet love,
For many months. I had no mortal fears;
Methought I felt her lips and breath approve,—
It was a human thing which to my bosom clove.

XX.

« I watch'd the dawn of her first smiles, and soon
When zenith-stars were trembling on the wave,
Or when the beams of the invisible moon,
Or sun, from many a prism within the cave
Their gem-born shadows to the water gave,
Her looks would hunt them, and with outspread hand,
From the swift lights which might that fountain pave,
She would mark one, and laugh, when that command
Slighting, it lingered there, and could not understand.

XXI.

« Methought her looks began to talk with me;
And no articulate sounds, but something sweet
Her lips would frame,—so sweet it could not be,
That it was meaningless: her touch would meet
Mine, and our pulses calmly flow and beat
In response while we slept; and on a day
When I was happiest in that strange retreat,
With heaps of golden shells we two did play,—
Both infants, weaving wings for time's perpetual way.

XXII.

« Ere night, methought, her waning eyes were grown
Weary with joy, and tired with our delight,
We, on the earth, like sister twins lay down
On one fair mother's bosom;—from that night
She fled;—like those illusions clear and bright,
Which dwell in lakes, when the red moon on high
Pause ere it wakens tempest;—and her flight,
Though 't was the death of brainless phantasy,
Yet smote my lonesome heart more than all misery.

XXIII.

« It seemed that in the dreary night, the diver
Who brought me thither, came again, and bore
My child away. I saw the waters quiver,
When he so swiftly sunk, as once before:
Then morning came—it shone even as of yore,
But I was changed—the very life was gone
Out of my heart—I wasted more and more,
Day after day, and sitting there alone,
Vex'd the inconstant waves with my perpetual moan.

XXIV.

« I was no longer mad, and yet methought
My breasts were swoln and changed:—in every vein
The blood stood still one moment, while that thought
Was passing—with a gush of sickening pain
It ebb'd even to its withered springs again:
When my wan eyes in stern resolve I turn'd
From that most strange delusion, which would fain
Have waked the dream for which my spirit yearn'd
With more than human love,—then left it unreturn'd.

XXV.

« So, now my reason was restored to me,
I struggled with that dream, which, like a beast
Most fierce and beauteous, in my memory
Had made its lair, and on my heart did feast;
But all that cave and all its shapes possest
By thoughts which could not fade, renew'd each one
Some smile, some look, some gesture which had blest
Me heretofore: I, sitting there alone,
Vex'd the inconstant waves with my perpetual moan.

XXVI.

« Time past, I know not whether months or years;
For day, nor night, nor change of seasons made
Its note, but thoughts and unavailing tears:
And I became at last even as a shade,
A smoke, a cloud on which the winds have prey'd,
Till it be thin as air; until, one even,
A Nautilus upon the fountain play'd,
Spreading his azure sail where breath of Heaven
Descended not, among the waves and whirlpools driven.

XXVII.

« And when the Eagle came, that lovely thing,
Oaring with rosy feet its silver boat,
Fled near me as for shelter; on slow wing,
The Eagle, hovering o'er his prey did float;
But when he saw that I with fear did note
His purpose, proffering my own food to him,
The eager plumes subsided on his throat—
He came where that bright child of sea did swim,
And o'er it cast in peace his shadow broad and dim.

XXVIII.

« This waken'd me, it gave me human strength;
And hope, I know not whence or wherefore, rose,
But I resumed my ancient powers at length;
My spirit felt again like one of those
Like thine, whose fate it is to make the woes
Of humankind their prey—what was this cave?
Its deep foundation no firm purpose knows
Immutable, resistless, strong to save,
Like mind while yet it mocks the all-devouring grave.

XXIX.

« And where was Laon? might my heart be dead,
While that far dearer heart could move and be?
Or whilst over the earth the pall was spread,
Which I had sworn to rend? I might be free,
Could I but win that friendly bird to me,
To bring me ropes; and long in vain I sought
By intercourse of mutual imagery
Of objects, if such aid he could be taught;
But fruit, and flowers, and boughs, yet never ropes he brought.

XXX.

« We live in our own world, and mine was made
From glorious phantasies of hope departed:
Aye, we are darkened with their floating shade,
Or cast a lustre on them—time imparted
Such power to me, I became fearless-hearted,
My eye and voice grew firm, calm was my mind,
And piercing, like the morn, now it has darted
Its lustre on all hidden things, behind
Yon dim and fading clouds which load the weary wind.

XXXI.

« My mind became the book through which I grew
Wise in all human wisdom, and its cave,
Which like a mine I rifled through and through,
To me the keeping of its secrets gave—
One mind, the type of all, the moveless wave
Whose calm reflects all moving things that are,
Necessity, and love, and life, the grave,
And sympathy, fountains of hope and fear;
Justice, and truth, and time, and the world's natural sphere.

XXXII.

« And on the sand would I make signs to range
These woofs, as they were woven, of my thought;
Clear, elemental shapes, whose smallest change
A subtler language within language wrought:
The key of truths which once were dimly taught
In old Crotona;—and sweet melodies
Of love, in that lone solitude I caught
From mine own voice in dream, when thy dear eyes
Shone through my sleep, and did that utterance harmonize.

XXXIII.

« Thy songs were winds whereon I fled at will,
As in a winged chariot, o'er the plain
Of crystal youth; and thou wert there to fill
My heart with joy, and there we sate again
On the grey margin of the glimmering main,
Happy as then but wiser far, for we
Smiled on the flowery grave in which were lain
Fear, Faith, and Slavery; and mankind was free,
Equal, and pure and wise, in wisdom's prophecy.

XXXIV.

« For to my will my fancies were as slaves
To do their sweet and subtile ministries;
And oft from that bright fountain's shadowy waves
They would make human throngs gather and rise
To combat with my overflowing eyes,
And voice made deep with passion—thus I grew
Familiar with the shock and the surprise
And war of earthly minds, from which I drew
The power which has been mine to frame their thoughts anew.

XXXV.

« And thus my prison was the populous earth—
Where I saw—even as misery dreams of morn
Before the east has given its glory birth—
Religion's pomp made desolate by the scorn
Of Wisdom's faintest smile, and thrones uptorn,
And dwellings of mild people interspersed
With undivided fields of ripening corn,
And love made free,—a hope which we have nurst
Even with our blood and tears,—until its glory burst.

XXXVI.

« All is not lost! there is some recompense
For hope whose fountain can be thus profound,
Even throned Evil's splendid impotence,
Girt by its hell of power, the secret sound
Of hymns to truth and freedom—the dread bound
Of life and death past fearlessly and well,
Dungeons wherein the high resolve is found,
Racks which degraded woman's greatness tell,
And what may else be good and irresistible.

XXXVII.

« Such are the thoughts which, like the fires that flare
In storm-encompass'd isles, we cherish yet
In this dark ruin—such were mine even there;
As in its sleep some odorous violet,
While yet its leaves with nightly dews are wet,
Breathes in prophetic dreams of day's uprise,
Or, as ere Scythian frost in fear has met
Spring's messengers descending from the skies,
The buds foreknow their life—this hope must ever rise.

XXXVIII.

« So years had past, when sudden earthquake rent
The depth of ocean, and the cavern crackt
With sound, as if the world's wide continent
Had fallen in universal ruin wrackt;
And through the cleft stream'd in one cataract,
The stifling waters:—when I woke, the flood
Whose banded waves that crystal cave had sack'd
Was ebbing round me, and my bright abode
Before me yawn'd—a chasm desert, and bare, and broad.

XXXIX.

« Above me was the sky, beneath the sea:
I stood upon a point of shattered stone,
And heard loose rocks rushing tumultuously
With splash and shock into the deep—anon
All ceased, and there was silence wide and lone.
I felt that I was free! the Ocean-spray
Quiver'd beneath my feet, the broad Heaven shone
Around, and in my hair the winds did play
Lingering as they pursued their unimpeded way.

XL.

« My spirit moved upon the sea like wind
Which round some thymy cape will lag and hover,
Though it can wake the still cloud, and unbind
The strength of tempest: day was almost over,
When through the fading light I could discover
A ship approaching—its white sails were fed
With the north wind—its moving shade did cover
The twilight deep;—the mariners in dread
Cast anchor when they saw new rocks around them spread.

XLI.

« And when they saw one sitting on a crag,
They sent a boat to me;—the sailors row'd
In awe through many a new and fearful jag
Of overhanging rock, through which there flow'd
The foam of streams that cannot make abode.
They came and questioned me, but when they heard
My voice, they became silent, and they stood
And moved as men in whom new love had stirr'd
Deep thoughts: so to the ship we past without a word.

CANTO VIII.

I.

« I SATE beside the steersman then, and gazing
Upon the west, cried, 'Spread the sails! behold!
The sinking moon is like a watch-tower blazing
Over the mountains yet;—the City of Gold
Yon Cape alone does from the sight withhold;
The stream is fleet—the north breathes steadily
Beneath the stars, they tremble with the cold!
Ye cannot rest upon the dreary sea!—
Haste, haste to the warm home of happier destiny!'

II.

« The Mariners obeyed—the Captain stood
Aloof, and whispering to the Pilot, said,
'Alas, alas! I fear we are pursued
By wicked ghosts: a Phantom of the Dead,
The night before we sail'd, came to my bed
In dream, like that!'—The Pilot then replied,
'It cannot be—she is a human Maid—
Her low voice makes you weep—she is some bride,
Or daughter of high birth—she can be nought beside.'

III.

« We past the islets, borne by wind and stream,
And as we sail'd, the Mariners came near
And throng'd around to listen;—in the gleam
Of the pale moon I stood, as one whom fear
May not attaint, and my calm voice did rear:
Ye all are human—yon broad moon gives light
To millions who the self-same likeness wear,
Even while I speak—beneath this very night,
Their thoughts flow on like ours, in sadness or delight.

IV.

« What dream ye? Your own hands have built a home,
Even for yourselves on a beloved shore:
For some, fond eyes are pining till they come,
How they will greet him when his toils are o'er,
And laughing babes rush from the well-known door!
Is this your care? ye toil for your own good—
Ye feel and think—has some immortal power
Such purposes? or in a human mood,
Dream ye some Power thus builds for man in solitude?

V.

« What is that Power? ye mock yourselves, and give
A human heart to what ye cannot know:
As if the cause of life could think and live!
'T were as if man's own works should feel, and show
The hopes, and fears, and thoughts from which they flow,
And he be like to them. Lo! Plague is free
To waste, Blight, Poison, Earthquake, Hail, and Snow,
Disease, and Want, and worse Necessity
Of hate and ill, and Pride, and Fear, and Tyranny.

VI.

«What is that Power? Some moon-struck sophist stood
Watching the shade from his own soul upthrown
Fill Heaven and darken Earth, and in such mood
The Form he saw and worshipp'd was his own,
His likeness in the world's vast mirror shown;
And 't were an innocent dream, but that a faith
Nursed by fear's dew of poison, grows thereon,
And that men say, that Power has chosen Death
On all who scorn its laws, to wreak immortal wrath.

VII.

« Men say that they themselves have heard and seen,
Or known from others who have known such things,
A Shade, a Form, which Earth and Heaven between
Wields an invisible rod—that Priests and Kings,
Custom, domestic sway, aye, all that brings
Man's free-born soul beneath the oppressor's heel,
Are his strong ministers, and that the stings
Of death will make the wise his vengeance feel,
Though truth and virtue arm their hearts with tenfold steel.

VIII.

« And it is said, this Power will punish wrong;
Yes, add despair to crime, and pain to pain!
And deepest hell, and deathless snakes among,
Will bind the wretch on whom is fix'd a stain,
Which, like a plague, a burthen, and a bane,
Clung to him while he lived;—for love and hate,
Virtue and vice, they say are difference vain—
The will of strength is right—this human state
Tyrants, that they may rule, with lies thus desolate.

IX.

« Alas, what strength? opinion is more frail
Than yon dim cloud now fading on the moon
Even while we gaze, though it awhile avail
To hide the orb of truth—and every throne
Of Earth or Heaven, though shadow rests thereon,
One shape of many names:—for this ye plough
The barren waves of ocean, hence each one
Is slave or tyrant; all betray and bow,
Command, or kill, or fear, or wreak, or suffer woe.

X.

« Its names are each a sign which maketh holy
All power—aye, the ghost, the dream, the shade,
Of power—lust, falsehood, hate, and pride, and folly;
The pattern whence all fraud and wrong is made,
A law to which mankind has been betray'd;
And human love, is as the name well known
Of a dear mother, whom the murderer laid
In bloody grave, and into darkness thrown,
Gather'd her wilder'd babes around him as his own.'

XI.

« O love! who to the hearts of wandering men
Art as the calm to Ocean's weary waves!
Justice, or truth, or joy! thou only can
From slavery and religion's labyrinth caves
Guide us, as one clear star the seaman saves.
To give to all an equal share of good,
To track the steps of freedom though through graves
She pass, to suffer all in patient mood,
To weep for crime, though stain'd with thy friend's dearest blood.

XII.

« To feel the peace of self-contentment's lot,
To own all sympathies, and outrage none,
And in the inmost bowers of sense and thought,
Until life's sunny day is quite gone down,
To sit and smile with Joy, or, not alone,
To kiss salt tears from the worn cheek of Woe;
To live, as if to love and live were one,—
This is not faith or law, nor those who bow
To thrones on Heaven or Earth, such destiny may know.

XIII.

« But children near their parents tremble now,
Because they must obey—one rules another,
And as one Power rules both high and low,
So man is made the captive of his brother,
And Hate is throned on high with Fear her mother,
Above the Highest—and those fountain-cells,
Whence love yet flow'd when faith had choked all other,
Are darkened—Woman, as the bond-slave, dwells
Of man, a slave; and life is poisoned in its wells.

XIV.

« Man seeks for gold in mines, that he may weave
A lasting chain for his own slavery;—
In fear and restless care that he may live
He toils for others, who must ever be
The joyless thralls of like captivity;
He murders, for his chiefs delight in ruin;
He builds the altar, that its idol's fee
May be his very blood; he is pursuing
O, blind and willing wretch! his own obscure undoing.

XV.

« Woman!—she is his slave, she has become
A thing I weep to speak—the child of scorn,
The outcast of a desolated home,
Falsehood, and fear, and toil, like waves have worn
Channels upon her cheek, which smiles adorn,
As calm decks the false Ocean:—well ye know
What Woman is, for none of Woman born
Can chuse but drain the bitter dregs of woe,
Which ever from the oppress'd to the oppressors flow.

XVI.

« This need not be; ye might arise, and will
That gold should lose its power, and thrones their glory;
That love, which none may bind, be free to fill
The world, like light; and evil faith, grown hoary
With crime, be quench'd and die.—Yon promontory
Even now eclipses the descending moon!—
Dungeons and palaces are transitory—
High temples fade like vapour—Man alone
Remains, whose will has power when all beside is gone.

XVII.

« Let all be free and equal!—from your hearts
I feel an echo; through my inmost frame
Like sweetest sound, seeking its mate, it darts—
Whence come ye, friends? alas, I cannot name
All that I read of sorrow, toil, and shame,
On your worn faces; as in legends old
Which make immortal the disastrous fame
Of conquerors and impostors false and bold,
The discord of your hearts, I in your looks behold.

XVIII.

« Whence come ye, friends? from pouring human blood
Forth on the earth? or bring ye steel and gold,
That Kings may dupe and slay the multitude?
Or from the famish'd poor, pale, weak, and cold,
Bear ye the earnings of their toil? unfold!
Speak! are your hands in slaughter's sanguine hue
Stain'd freshly? have your hearts in guile grown old?
Know yourselves thus! ye shall be pure as dew,
And I will be a friend and sister unto you.

XIX.

« Disguise it not—we have one human heart—
All mortal thoughts confess a common home:
Blush not for what may to thyself impart
Stains of inevitable crime: the doom
Is this, which has, or may, or must become
Thine, and all human kind's. Ye are the spoil
Which Time thus marks for the devouring tomb,
Thou and thy thoughts and they, and all the toil
Wherewith ye twine the rings of life's perpetual coil.

XX.

Disguise it not—ye blush for what ye hate,
And Enmity is sister unto Shame;
Look on your mind—it is the book of fate—
Ah! it is dark with many a blazon'd name
Of misery—all are mirrors of the same;
But the dark fiend who with his iron pen
Dipp'd in scorn's fiery poison, makes his fame
Enduring there, would o'er the heads of men
Pass harmless, if they scorn'd to make their hearts his den.

XXI.

« Yes, it is Hate, that shapeless fiendly thing
Of many names, all evil, some divine,
Whom self-contempt arms with a mortal sting;
Which, when the heart its snaky folds entwine
Is wasted quite, and when it doth repine
To gorge such bitter prey, on all beside
It turns with ninefold rage, as with its twine
When Amphisbæna some fair bird has tied,
Soon o'er the putrid mass he threats on every side.

XXII.

« Reproach not thine own soul, but know thyself,
Nor hate another's crime, nor loathe thine own.
It is the dark idolatry of self,
Which, when our thoughts and actions once are gone,
Demands that man should weep, and bleed, and groan;
O vacant expiation! be at rest.—
The past is Death's, the future is thine own;
And love and joy can make the foulest breast
A paradise of flowers, where peace might build her nest.

XXIII.

« 'Speak thou! whence come ye?'—A Youth made reply,
« Wearily, wearily o'er the boundless deep
We sail;—thou readest well the misery
Told in these faded eyes, but much doth sleep
Within, which there the poor heart loves to keep,
Or dare not write on the dishonour'd brow;
Even from our childhood have we learn'd to steep
The bread of slavery in the tears of woe,
And never dream'd of hope or refuge until now.

XXIV.

« 'Yes—I must speak—my secret should have perish'd
Even with the heart it wasted, as a brand
Fades in the dying flame whose life it cherish'd,
But that no human bosom can withstand
Thee, wondrous Lady, and the mild command
Of thy keen eyes:—yes, we are wretched slaves,
Who from their wonted loves and native land
Are reft, and bear o'er the dividing waves
The unregarded prey of calm and happy graves.

XXV.

« 'We drag afar from pastoral vales the fairest,
Among the daughters of those mountains lone,
We drag them there, where all things best and rarest
Are stain'd and trampled:—years have come and gone
Since, like the ship which bears me, I have known
No thought;—but now the eyes of one dear Maid
On mine with light of mutual love have shone—
She is my life,—I am but as the shade
Of her,—a smoke sent up from ashes, soon to fade.

XXVI.

« 'For she must perish in the tyrant's hall—
Alas, alas!'—He ceased, and by the sail
Sate cowering—but his sobs were heard by all,
And still before the ocean and the gale
The ship fled fast till the stars 'gan to fail,
And round me gathered with mute countenance,
The Seamen gazed, the Pilot, worn and pale
With toil, the Captain with grey locks, whose glance
Met mine in restless awe—they stood as in a trance.

XXVII.

« Recede not! pause not now! thou art grown old,
But Hope will make thee young, for Hope and Youth
Are children of one mother, even Love—behold!
The eternal stars gaze on us!—is the truth
Within your soul? care for your own, or ruth
For other's sufferings? do ye thirst to bear
A heart which not the serpent custom's tooth
May violate?—be free! and even here,
Swear to be firm till death! they cried, 'We swear! we swear!'

XXVIII.

« The very darkness shook, as with a blast
Of subterranean thunder at the cry;
The hollow shore its thousand echoes east
Into the night, as if the sea, and sky,
And earth, rejoiced with new-born liberty,
For in that name they swore! Bolts were undrawn,
And on the deck, with unaccustom'd eye
The captives gazing stood, and every one
Shrank as the inconstant torch upon her countenance shone.

XXIX.

« They were earth's purest children, young and fair,
With eyes the shrines of unawaken'd thought,
And brows as bright as spring or morning, ere
Dark time had there its evil legend wrought
In characters of cloud which wither not.—
The change was like a dream to them; but soon
They knew the glory of their altered lot,
In the bright wisdom of youth's breathless noon,
Sweet talk, and smiles, and sighs, all bosoms did attune.

XXX.

« But one was mute, her cheeks and lips most fair,
Changing their hue like lilies newly blown,
Beneath a bright acacia's shadowy hair,
Waved by the wind amid the sunny noon,
Show'd that her soul was quivering; and full soon
That Youth arose, and breathlessly did look
On her and me, as for some speechless boon:
I smiled, and both their hands in mine I took,
And felt a soft delight from what their spirits shook.

CANTO IX.

I.

« That night we anchor'd in a woody bay,
And sleep no more around us dared to hover
Than, when all doubt and fear has past away,
It shades the couch of some unresting lover,
Whose heart is now at rest: thus night past over
In mutual joy:—around, a forest grew
Of poplars and dark oaks, whose shade did cover
The waning stars prankt in the waters blue,
And trembled in the wind which from the morning flew.

II.

« The joyous mariners, and each free maiden,
Now brought from the deep forest many a bough,
With woodland spoil most innocently laden;
Soon wreaths of budding foliage seemed to flow
Over the mast and sails, the stern and prow
Were canopied with blooming boughs,—the while
On the slant sun's path o'er the waves we go
Rejoicing, like the dwellers of an isle
Doom'd to pursue those waves that cannot cease to smile.

III.

« The many ships spotting the dark blue deep
With snowy sails, fled fast as ours came nigh,
In fear and wonder; and on every steep
Thousands did gaze, they heard the startling cry,
Like earth's own voice lifted unconquerably
To all her children, the unbounded mirth,
The glorious joy of thy name—Liberty!
They heard!—As o'er the mountains of the earth
From peak to peak leap on the beams of morning's birth:

IV.

« So from that cry over the boundless hills,
Sudden was caught one universal sound,
Like a volcano's voice, whose thunder fills
Remotest skies,—such glorious madness found
A path through human hearts with stream which drown'd
Its struggling fears and cares, dark custom's brood,
They knew not whence it came, but felt around
A wide contagion pour'd—they call'd aloud
On Liberty—that name lived on the sunny flood.

V.

« We reach'd the port—alas! from many spirits
The wisdom which had waked that cry, was fled,
Like the brief glory which dark Heaven inherits
From the false dawn, which fades ere it is spread,
Upon the night's devouring darkness shed:
Yet soon bright day will burst—even like a chasm
Of fire, to burn the shrouds outworn and dead,
Which wrap the world; a wide enthusiasm,
To cleanse the fever'd world as with an earthquake's spasm!

VI.

« I walked through the great City then, but free
From shame or fear; those toil-worn Mariners
And happy Maidens did encompass me;
And like a subterranean wind that stirs
Some forest among caves, the hopes and fears
From every human soul, a murmur strange
Made as I past; and many wept, with tears
Of joy and awe, and winged thoughts did range,
And half-extinguish'd words, which prophesied of change.

VII.

« For, with strong speech I tore the veil that hid
Nature, and Truth, and Liberty, and Love,—
As one who from some mountain's pyramid,
Points to the unrisen sun!—the shades approve
His truth, and flee from every stream and grove.
Thus, gentle thoughts did many a bosom fill,—
Wisdom, the mail of tried affections wove
For many a heart, and tameless scorn of ill,
Thrice steeped in molten steel the unconquerable will.

VIII.

« Some said I was a maniac wild and lost;
Some, that I scarce had risen from the grave
The Prophet's virgin bride, a heavenly ghost:—
Some said, I was a fiend from my weird cave,
Who had stolen human shape, and o'er the wave,
The forest, and the mountain came;—some said
I was the child of God, sent down to save
Women from bonds and death, and on my head
The burthen of their sins would frightfully be laid.

IX.

« But soon my human words found sympathy
In human hearts: the purest and the best,
As friend with friend made common cause with me,
And they were few, but resolute;—the rest,
Ere yet success the enterprise had blest,
Leagued with me in their hearts;—their meals, their slumber,
Their hourly occupations were possest
By hopes which I had arm'd to overnumber,
Those hosts of meaner cares, which life's strong wings encumber.

X.

« But chiefly women, whom my voice did waken
From their cold, careless, willing slavery,
Sought me: one truth their dreary prison has shaken,—
They look'd around, and lo! they became free!
Their many tyrants sitting desolately
In slave-deserted halls, could none restrain;
For wrath's red fire had wither'd in the eye,
Whose lightning once was death,—nor fear, nor gain
Could tempt one captive now to lock another's chain.

XI.

« Those who were sent to bind me, wept, and felt
Their minds outsoar the bonds which clasp'd them round,
Even as a waxen shape may waste and melt
In the white furnace; and a vision'd swound,
A pause of hope and awe the City bound,
Which, like the silence of a tempest's birth,
When in its awful shadow it has wound
The sun, the wind, the ocean, and the earth,
Hung terrible, ere yet the lightnings have leapt forth.

XII.

« Like clouds inwoven in the silent sky,
By winds from distant regions meeting there,
In the high name of truth and liberty
Around the City milions gather'd were,
By hopes which sprang from many a hidden lair;
Words, which the lore of truth in hues of grace
Array'd, thine own wild songs which in the air
Like homeless odours floated, and the name
Of thee, and many a tongue which thou hadst dipp'd in flame.

XIII.

« The Tyrant knew his power was gone, but Fear,
The nurse of Vengeance, bade him wait the event—
That perfidy and custom, gold and prayer,
And whatsoe'er, when force is impotent,
To fraud the sceptre of the world has lent,
Might, as he judged, confirm his failing sway.
Therefore throughout the streets, the Priests he sent
To curse the rebels.—To their gods did they
For Earthquake, Plague, and Want, kneel in the public way.

XIV.

« And grave and hoary men were bribed to tell
From seats where law is made the slave of wrong,
How glorious Athens in her splendour fell,
Because her sons were free,—and that among
Mankind, the many to the few belong,
By Heaven, and Nature, and Necessity.
They said, that age was truth, and that the young
Marr'd with wild hopes the peace of slavery,
With which old times and men had quell'd the vain and free.

XV.

« And with the falsehood of their poisonous lips
They breathed on the enduring memory
Of sages and of bards a brief eclipse;
There was one teacher, who, necessity
Had armed, with strength and wrong against mankind,
His slave and his avenger aye to be;
That we were weak and sinful, frail and blind,
And that the will of one was peace, and we
Should seek for nought on earth but toil and misery.

XVI.

« ' For thus we might avoid the hell hereafter.'
So spake the hypocrites, who cursed and lied;
Alas, their sway was past, and tears and laughter
Clung to their hoary hair, withering the pride
Which in their hollow hearts dared still abide;
And yet obscener slaves with smoother brow,
And sneers on their strait lips, thin, blue and wide,
Said, that the rule of men was over now,
And hence, the subject world to woman's will must bow;

XVII.

« And gold was scatter'd through the streets, and wine
Flow'd at a hundred feasts within the wall.
In vain! the steady towers in Heaven did shine
As they were wont, nor at the priestly call,
Left Plague her banquet in the Æthiop's hall,
Nor famine from the rich man's portal came,
Where at her ease she ever preys on all
Who throng to kneel for food: nor fear nor shame,
Nor faith, nor discord, dimm'd hope's newly kindled flame.

XVIII.

« For gold was as a god whose faith began
To fade, so that its worshippers were few,
And Faith itself, which in the heart of man
Gives shape, voice, name, to spectral Terror, knew
Its downfall, as the altars lonelier grew,
Till the Priests stood alone within the fane;
The shafts of falsehood unpolluting flew,
And the cold sneers of calumny were vain
The union of the free with discord's brand to stain.

XIX.

« The rest thou knowest—Lo! we two are here—
We have survived a ruin wide and deep—
Strange thoughts are mine.—I cannot grieve or fear,
Sitting with thee upon this lonely steep
I smile, though human love should make me weep.
We have survived a joy that knows no sorrow,
And I do feel a mighty calmness creep
Over my heart, which can no longer borrow
Its hues from chance or change, dark children of to-morrow.

XX.

« We know not what will come—yet Laon, dearest,
Cythna shall be the prophetess of love,
Her lips shall rob thee of the grace thou wearest,
To hide thy heart, and clothe the shapes which rove
Within the homeless future's wintry grove;
For I now, sitting thus beside thee, seem
Even with thy breath and blood to live and move,
And violence and wrong are as a dream
Which rolls from stedfast truth an unreturning stream.

XXI.

« The blasts of autumn drive the winged seeds
Over the earth,—next come the snows, and rain,
And frost, and storms, which dreary winter leads
Out of his Scythian cave, a savage train;
Behold! Spring sweeps over the world again,
Shedding soft dews from her ætherial wings;
Flowers on the mountains, fruits over the plain,
And music on the waves and woods she flings,
And love on all that lives, and calm on lifeless things.

XXII.

« O Spring! of hope, and love, and youth, and gladness
Wind-winged emblem! brightest, best and fairest!
Whence comest thou, when, with dark winter's sadness
The tears that fade in sunny smiles thou sharest?
Sister of joy! thou art the child who wearest
Thy mother's dying smile, tender and sweet;
Thy mother Autumn, for whose grave thou bearest
Fresh flowers, and beams like flowers, with gentle feet,
Disturbing not the leaves which are her winding-sheet.

XXIII.

« Virtue, and Hope, and Love, like light and Heaven,
Surround the world.—We are their chosen slaves.
Has not the whirlwind of our spirit driven
Truth's deathless germs to thought's remotest caves?
Lo, Winter comes!—the grief of many graves,
The frost of death, the tempest of the sword,
The flood of tyranny, whose sanguine waves
Stagnate like ice at Faith, the enchanter's word,
And bind all human hearts in its repose abhorr'd.

XXIV.

« The seeds are sleeping in the soil: meanwhile
The tyrant peoples dungeons with his prey,
Pale victims on the guarded scaffold smile
Because they cannot speak; and, day by day,
The moon of wasting Science wanes away
Among her stars, and in that darkness vast
The sons of earth to their foul idols pray,
And grey Priests triumph, and like blight or blast
A shade of selfish care o'er human looks is cast.

XXV.

« This is the winter of the world;—and here
We die, even as the winds of Autumn fade,
Expiring in the frore and foggy air.—
Behold! Spring comes, though we must pass, who made
The promise of its birth,—even as the shade
Which from our death, as from a mountain, flings
The future, a broad sunrise; thus arrayed
As with the plumes of overshadowing wings,
From its dark gulf of chains, Earth like an eagle springs.

XXVI.

« O dearest love! we shall be dead and cold
Before this morn may on the world arise;
Wouldst thou the glory of its dawn behold?
Alas! gaze not on me, but turn thine eyes
On thine own heart—it is a paradise
Which everlasting spring has made its own,
And while drear Winter fills the naked skies,
Sweet streams of sunny thought, and flowers fresh blown,
Are there, and weave their sounds and odours into one.

XXVII.

« In their own hearts the earnest of the hope
Which made them great, the good will ever find;
And though some envious shade may interlope
Between the effect and it, one comes behind,
Who aye the future to the past will bind—
Necessity, whose sightless strength forever
Evil with evil, good with good must wind
In bands of union, which no power may sever:
They must bring forth their kind, and be divided never!

XXVIII.

« The good and mighty of departed ages
Are in their graves, the innocent and free,
Heroes, and Poets, and prevailing Sages,
Who leave the vesture of their majesty
To adorn and clothe this naked world;—and we
Are like to them—such perish, but they leave
All hope, or love, or truth, or liberty,
Whose forms their mighty spirits could conceive
To be a rule and law to ages that survive.

XXIX.

« So be the turf heap'd over our remains
Even in our happy youth, and that strange lot,
Whate'er it be, when in these mingling veins
The blood is still, be ours; let sense and thought
Pass from our being, or be number'd not
Among the things that are; let those who come
Behind, for whom our stedfast will has brought
A calm inheritance, a glorious doom,
Insult with careless tread, our undivided tomb.

XXX.

« Our many thoughts and deeds, our life and love,
Our happiness, and all that we have been,
Immortally must live, and burn and move,
When we shall be no more;—the world has seen
A type of peace; and as some most serene
And lovely spot to a poor maniac's eye,
After long years, some sweet and moving scene
Of youthful hope returning suddenly,
Quells his long madness—thus man shall remember thee.

XXXI.

« And Calumny meanwhile shall feed on us,
As worms devour the dead, and near the throne
And at the altar, most accepted thus
Shall sneers and curses be;—what we have done
None shall dare vouch, though it be truly known;
That record shall remain, when they must pass
Who built their pride on its oblivion;
And fame, in human hope which sculptured was,
Survive the perished scrolls of unenduring brass.

XXXII.

« The while we two, beloved, must depart,
And Sense and Reason, those inchanters fair,
Whose wand of power is hope, would bid the heart
That gazed beyond the wormy grave despair:
These eyes, these lips, this blood, seems darkly there
To fade in hideous ruin; no calm sleep
Peopling with golden dreams the stagnant air,
Seems our obscure and rotting eyes to steep
In joy;—but senseless death—a ruin dark and deep!

XXXIII.

« These are blind fancies—reason cannot know
What sense can neither feel, nor thought conceive;
There is delusion in the world—and woe,
And fear, and pain—we know not whence we live,
Or why, or how, or what mute Power may give
Their being to each plant, and star, and beast,
Or even these thoughts:—Come near me! I do weave
A chain I cannot break—I am possest
With thoughts too swift and strong for one lone human breast.

XXXIV.

« Yes, yes—thy kiss is sweet, thy lips are warm—
O! willingly beloved, would these eyes,
Might they no more drink being from thy form,
Even as to sleep whence we again arise,
Close their faint orbs in death: I fear nor prize
Aught that can now betide, unshared by thee—
Yes, Love when wisdom fails makes Cythna wise:
Darkness and death, if death be true, must be
Dearer than life and hope, if unenjoy'd with thee.

XXXV.

« Alas, our thoughts flow on with stream, whose waters
Return not to their fountain—Earth and Heaven,
The Ocean and the Sun, the clouds their daughters,
Winter, and Spring, and Morn, and Noon, and Even,
All that we are or know, is darkly driven
Towards one gulf—Lo! what a change is come
Since I first spake—but time shall be forgiven,
Though it change all but thee!» —She ceased, night's gloom
Meanwhile had fallen on earth from the sky's sunless dome.

XXXVI.

Though she had ceased, her countenance uplifted
To Heaven, still spake, with solemn glory bright;
Her dark deep eyes, her lips, whose motions gifted
The air they breathed with love, her locks undight;
« Fair star of life and love!» I cried, « my soul's delight!
Why lookest thou on the crystalline skies?
O, that my spirit were yon Heaven of night,
Which gazes on thee with its thousand eyes!»
She turn'd to me and smiled—that smile was Paradise!

CANTO X.

I.

Was there a human spirit in the steed,
That thus with his proud voice, ere night was gone,
He broke our linked rest? or do indeed
All living things a common nature own,
And thought erect a universal throne,
Where many shapes one tribute ever bear?
And Earth, their mutual mother, does she groan
To see her sons contend? and makes she bare
Her breast, that all in peace its drainless stores may share?

II.

I have heard friendly sounds from many a tongue,
Which was not human—the lone Nightingale
Has answer'd me with her most soothing song,
Out of her ivy bower, when I sate pale
With grief, and sigh'd beneath; from many a dale
The Antelopes who flock'd for food have spoken
With happy sounds, and motions, that avail
Like man's own speech; and such was now the token
Of waning night, whose calm by that proud neigh was broken.

III.

Each night, that mighty steed bore me abroad,
And I returned with food to our retreat,
And dark intelligence; the blood which flow'd
Over the fields, had stain'd the courser's feet;—
Soon the dust drinks that bitter dew,—then meet
The vulture, and the wild-dog, and the snake,
The wolf, and the hyæna grey, and eat
The dead in horrid truce: their throngs did make
Behind the steed, a chasm like waves in a ship's wake.

IV.

For, from the utmost realms of earth, came pouring
The banded slaves whom every despot sent
At that throned traitor's summons; like the roaring
Of fire, whose floods the wild deer circumvent
In the scorch'd pastures of the South; so bent
The armies of the leagued kings around
Their files of steel and flame;—the continent
Trembled, as with a zone of ruin bound,
Beneath their feet, the sea shook with their Navies' sound.

V.

From every nation of the earth they came,
The multitude of moving heartless things,
Whom slaves call men: obediently they came,
Like sheep whom from the fold the shepherd brings
To the stall, red with blood; their many kings
Led them, thus erring, from their native home;
Tartar and Frank, and millions whom the wings
Of Indian breezes lull, and many a band
The Arctic Anarch sent, and Idumea's sand,

VI.

Fertile in prodigies and lies;—so there
Strange natures made a brotherhood of ill.
The desert savage ceased to grasp in fear
His Asian shield and bow, when, at the will
Of Europe's subtler son, the bolt would kill
Some shepherd sitting on a rock secure;
But smiles of wondering joy his face would fill,
And savage sympathy: those slaves impure,
Each one the other thus from ill to ill did lure.

VII.

For traitorously did that foul Tyrant robe
His countenance in lies,—even at the hour
When he was snatch'd from death, then o'er the globe,
With secret signs from many a mountain tower,
With smoke by day, and fire by night, the power
Of kings and priests, those dark conspirators
He call'd:—they knew his cause their own, and swore
Like wolves, and serpents to their mutual wars
Strange truce, with many a rite which Earth and Heaven abhors.

VIII.

Myriads had come—millions were on their way;
The Tyrant past, surrounded by the steel
Of hired assassins, through the public way,
Choked with his country's dead:—his footsteps reel
On the fresh blood—he smiles, « Aye, now I feel
I am a King in truth!» he said, and took
His royal seat, and bade the torturing wheel
Be brought, and fire, and pincers, and the hook,
And scorpions; that his soul on its revenge might look.

IX.

« But first, go slay the rebels—why return
The victor bands?» he said, « millions yet live,
Of whom the weakest with one word might turn
The scales of victory yet;—let none survive
But those within the walls—each fifth shall give
The expiation for his brethren here.—
Go forth, and waste and kill!» —« O king, forgive
My speech,» a soldier answer'd—« but we fear
The spirits of the night, and morn is drawing near;

X.

« For we were slaying still without remorse,
And now that dreadful chief beneath my hand
Defenceless lay, when, on a hell-black horse,
An Angel bright as day, waving a brand
Which flash'd among the stars, past.»—« Dost thou stand
Parleying with me, thou wretch?» the king replied;
« Slaves, bind him to the wheel; and of this band,
Whoso will drag that woman to his side
That seared him thus, may burn his dearest foe beside;

XI.

« And gold and glory shall be his.—Go forth!»
They rush'd into the plain.—Loud was the roar
Of their career: the horsemen shook the earth;
The wheel'd artillery's speed the pavement tore;
The infantry, file after file, did pour
Their clouds on the utmost hills. Five days they slew
Among the wasted fields: the sixth saw gore
Stream through the city; on the seventh, the dew
Of slaughter became stiff; and there was peace anew:

XII.

Peace in the desert fields and villages,
Between the glutted beasts and mangled dead!
Peace in the silent streets! save when the cries
Of victims to their fiery judgment led,
Made pale their voiceless lips who seem'd to dread
Even in their dearest kindred, lest some tongue
Be faithless to the fear yet unbetray'd;
Peace in the Tyrant's palace, where the throng
Waste the triumphal hours in festival and song!

XIII.

Day after day the burning Sun rolled on
Over the death-polluted land—it came
Out of the east like fire, and fiercely shone
A lamp of Autumn, ripening with its flame
The few lone ears of corn;—the sky became
Stagnate with heat, so that each cloud and blast
Languish'd and died,—the thirsting air did claim
All moisture, and a rotting vapour past
From the unburied dead, invisible and fast.

XIV.

First Want, then Plague came on the beasts; their food
Failed, and they drew the breath of its decay.
Millions on millions, whom the scent of blood
Had lured, or who, from regions far away,
Had track'd the hosts in festival array,
From their dark deserts; gaunt and wasting now,
Stalk'd like fell shades among their perish'd prey;
In their green eyes a strange disease did glow,
They sank in hideous spasm, or pains severe and slow.

XV.

The fish were poison'd in the streams; the birds
In the green woods perish'd; the insect race
Was wither'd up; the scatter'd flocks and herds
Who had survived the wild beasts' hungry chace
Died moaning, each upon the other's face
In helpless agony gazing; round the City
All night, the lean hyænas their sad ease
Like starving infants wailed; a woeful ditty!
And many a mother wept, pierced with unnatural pity.

XVI.

Amid the aërial minarets on high,
The Æthiopian vulturcs fluttering fell
From their long line of brethren in the sky,
Startling the concourse of mankind.—Too well
These signs the coming mischief did foretell:—
Strange panic first, a deep and sickening dread
Within each heart, like ice, did sink and dwell,
A voiceless thought of evil, which did spread
With the quick glance of eyes, like withering lightnings shed.

XVII.

Day after day, when the year wanes, the frosts
Strip its green crown of leaves, till all is bare;
So on those strange and congregated hosts
Came Famine, a swift shadow, and the air
Groaned with the burthen of a new despair;
Famine, than whom Misrule no deadlier daughter
Feeds from her thousand breasts, though sleeping there
With lidless eyes, lie Faith, and Plague, and Slaughter,
A ghastly brood; conceived of Lethe's sullen water.

XVIII.

There was no food, the corn was trampled down,
The flocks and herds had perished; on the shore
The dead and putrid fish were ever thrown:
The deeps were foodless, and the winds no more
Creak'd with the weight of birds, but as before
Those winged things sprang forth, were void of shade;
The vines and orchards, Autumn's golden store,
Were burn'd;—so that the meanest food was weigh'd
With gold, and Avarice died before the god it made.

XIX.

There was no corn—in the wide market-place
All loathliest things, even human flesh, was sold;
They weigh'd it in small scales—and many a face
Was fix'd in eager horror then: his gold
The miser brought, the tender maid, grown bold
Through hunger, bared her scorned charms in vain:
The mother brought her eldest born, controll'd
By instinct blind as love, but turn'd again
And bade her infant suck, and died in silent pain.

XX.

Then fell blue Plague upon the race of man.
« O, for the sheathed steel, so late which gave
Oblivion to the dead, when the streets ran
With brothers' blood! O, that the earthquake's grave
Would gape, or Ocean lift its stifling wave!»
Vain cries—throughout the streets, thousands pursued
Each by his fiery torture howl and rave,
Or sit, in frenzy's unimagined mood,
Upon fresh heaps of dead; a ghastly multitude.

XXI.

It was not hunger now, but thirst. Each well
Was choked with rotting corpses, and became
A cauldron of green mist made visible
At sunrise. Thither still the myriads came,
Seeking to quench the agony of the flame
Which raged like poison through their bursting veins;
Naked they were from torture, without shame,
Spotted with nameless scars and lurid blains,
Childhood, and youth, and age, writhing in savage pains.

XXII.

It was not thirst but madness! many saw
Their own lean image every where, it went
A ghastlier self beside them, till the awe
Of that dread sight to self-destruction sent
Those shrieking victims; some, ere life was spent,
Sought, with a horrid sympathy, to shed
Contagion on the sound; and others rent
Their matted hair, and cried aloud, « We tread
On fire! the avenging Power his hell on earth has spread.»

XXIII.

Sometimes the living by the dead were hid.
Near the great fountain in the public square,
Where corpses made a crumbling pyramid
Under the sun, was heard one stifled prayer
For life, in the hot silence of the air;
And strange 't was, amid that hideous heap to see
Some shrouded in their long and golden hair,
As if not dead, but slumbering quietly,
Like forms which sculptors carve, then love to agony.

XXIV.

Famine had spared the palace of the king:—
He rioted in festival the while,
He and his guards and priests; but Plague did fling
One shadow upon all. Famine can smile
On him who brings it food and pass, with guile
Of thankful falsehood, like a courtier grey,
The house-dog of the throne; but many a mile
Comes Plague, a winged wolf, who loathes alway
The garbage and the scum that strangers make her prey.

XXV.

So, near the throne, amid the gorgeous feast,
Sheathed in resplendent arms, or loosely dight
To luxury, ere the mockery yet had ceased
That linger'd on his lips, the warrior's might
Was loosen'd, and a new and ghastlier night
In dreams of frenzy lapp'd his eyes; he fell
Headlong, or with stiff eyeballs sate upright
Among the guests, or raving mad, did tell
Strange truths; a dying seer of dark oppression's hell.

XXVI.

The Princes and the Priests were pale with terror;
That monstrous faith wherewith they ruled mankind,
Fell, like a shaft loosed by the bowman's error,
On their own hearts; they sought and they could find
No refuge—'t was the blind who led the blind!
So, through the desolate streets to the high fane,
The many-tongued and endless armies wind
In sad procession: each among the train
To his own Idol lifts his supplications vain.

XXVII.

«O God!» they cried, «we know our secret pride
Has scorn'd thee, and thy worship, and thy name;
Secure in human power we have defied
Thy fearful might; we bend in fear and shame
Before thy presence; with the dust we claim
Kindred; be merciful, O King of Heaven!
Most justly have we suffer'd for thy fame
Made dim, but be at length our sins forgiven,
Ere to despair and death thy worshippers be driven.

XXVIII.

« O King of Glory! thou alone hast power!
Who can resist thy will? who can restrain
Thy wrath, when on the guilty thou dost shower
The shafts of thy revenge, a blistering rain?
Greatest and best, be merciful again!
Have we not stabb'd thine enemies, and made
The Earth an altar, and the Heavens a fane,
Where thou wert worshipp'd with their blood, and laid
Those hearts in dust which would thy searchless Works have weigh'd?

XXIX.

« Well didst thou loosen on this impious City
Thine angels of revenge: recall them now;
Thy worshippers, abased, here kneel for pity,
And bind their souls by an immortal vow:
We swear by thee! and to our oath do thou
Give sanction, from thine hell of fiends and flame,
That we will kill with fire and torments slow,
The last of those who mock'd thy holy name,
And scorn'd the sacred laws thy prophets did proclaim.»

XXX.

Thus they with trembling limbs and pallid lips
Worshipp'd their own hearts' image, dim and vast,
Scared by the shade wherewith they would eclipse
The light of other minds;—troubled they past
From the great Temple;—fiercely still and fast
The arrows of the plague among them fell,
And they on one another gazed aghast,
And through the hosts contention wild befell,
As each of his own god the wondrous works did tell.

XXXI.

And Oromaze, Joshua, and Mahomet,
Moses, and Buddh, Zerdusht, and Brahm, and Foh,
A tumult of strange names, which never met
Before, as watch-words of a single woe,
Arose; each raging votary 'gan to throw
Aloft his armed hands, and each did howl
« Our God alone is God!» and slaughter now
Would have gone forth, when from beneath a cowl
A voice came forth, which pierced like ice through every soul.

XXXII.

'T was an Iberian Priest from whom it came,
A zealous man, who led the legion'd west
With words which faith and pride had steep'd in flame,
To quell the unbelievers; a dire guest
Even to his friends was he, for in his breast
Did hate and guile lie watchful, intertwined,
Twin serpents in one deep and winding nest;
He loathed all faith beside his own, and pined
To wreak his fear of Heaven in vengeance on mankind.

XXXIII.

But more he loathed and hated the clear light
Of wisdom and free thought, and more did fear,
Lest, kindled once, its beams might pierce the night,
Even where his Idol stood; for, far and near
Did many a heart in Europe leap to hear
That faith and tyranny were trampled down;
Many a pale victim, doom'd for truth to share
The murderer's cell, or see, with helpless groan,
The priests his children drag for slaves to serve their own.

XXXIV.

He dared not kill the infidels with fire
Or steel, in Europe: the slow agonies
Of legal torture mock'd his keen desire:
So he made truce with those who did despise
The expiation, and the sacrifice,
That, though detested, Islam's kindred creed
Might crush for him those deadlier enemies;
For fear of God did in his bosom breed
A jealous hate of man, an unreposing need.

XXXV.

« Peace! Peace!» he cried, « when we are dead, the Day
Of judgment comes, and all shall surely know
Whose God is God, each fearfully shall pay
The errors of his faith in endless woe!
But there is sent a mortal vengeance now
On earth, because an impious race had spurn'd
Him whom we all adore,—a subtile foe,
By whom for ye this dread reward was earn'd,
And kingly thrones, which rest on faith, nigh overturn'd.

XXXVI.

« Think ye, because ye weep, and kneel, and pray,
That God will lull the pestilence? it rose
Even from beneath his throne, where, many a day
His mercy soothed it to a dark repose:
It walks upon the earth to judge his foes,
And what are thou and I, that he should deign
To curb his ghastly minister, or close
The gates of death, ere they receive the twain
Who shook with mortal spells his undefended reign!

XXXVII.

« Aye, there is famine in the gulf of hell,
Its giant worms of fire for ever yawn,—
Their lurid eyes are on us! those who fell
By the swifts shaft of pestilence ere dawn,
Are in their jaws! they hunger for the spawn
Of Satan, their own brethren, who were sent
To make our souls their spoil. See! see! they fawn
Like dogs, and they will sleep with luxury spent,
When those detested hearts their iron fangs have rent!

XXXVIII.

« Our God may then lull Pestilence to sleep:
Pile high the pyre of expiation now!
A forest's spoil of boughs, and on the heap
Pour venomous gums, which sullenly and slow,
When touch'd by flame, shall burn, and melt, and flow,
A stream of clinging fire,—and fix on high
A net of iron, and spread forth below
A couch of snakes, and scorpions, and the fry
Of centipedes and worms, earth's hellish progeny!

XXXIX.

« Let Laon and Laone on that pyre,
Linked tight with burning brass, perish!—then pray
That, with this sacrifice, the withering ire
Of Heaven may be appeased.» He ceased, and they
A space stood silent, as far, far away
The echoes of his voice among them died;
And he knelt down upon the dust, alway
Muttering the curses of his speechless pride,
Whilst shame, and fear, and awe, the armies did divide.

XL.

His voice was like a blast that burst the portal
Of fabled hell; and as he spake, each one
Saw gape beneath the chasms of fire immortal,
And Heaven above seem'd cloven, where, on a throne
Girt round with storms and shadows, sate alone,
Their King and Judge—fear kill'd in every breast
All natural pity then, a fear unknown
Before, and with an inward fire possest,
They raged like homeless beasts whom burning woods invest.

XLI.

'T was morn—at noon the public crier went forth,
Proclaiming through the living and the dead,
« The Monarch saith, that this great Empire's worth
Is set on Laon and Laone's head:
He who but one yet living here can lead,
Or who the life from both their hearts can wring,
Shall be the kingdom's heir, a glorious meed!
But he who both alive can hither bring,
The Princess shall espouse, and reign an equal King.»

XLII.

Ere night the pyre was piled, the net of iron
Was spread above, the fearful couch below,
It overtopp'd the towers that did environ
That spacious square; for Fear is never slow
To build the thrones of Hate, her mate and foe,
So, she scourged forth the maniac multitude
To rear this pyramid—tottering and slow,
Plague-stricken, foodless, like lean herds pursued
By gad-flies, they have piled the heath, and gums, and wood.

XLIII.

Night came, a starless and a moonless gloom.
Until the dawn, those hosts of many a nation
Stood round that pile, as near one lover's tomb
Two gentle sisters mourn their desolation;
And in the silence of that expectation,
Was heard on high the reptiles' hiss and crawl—
It was so deep, save when the devastation
Of the swift pest with fearful interval,
Marking its path with shrieks, among the crowd would fall.

XLIV.

Morn came,—among those sleepless multitudes,
Madness, and Fear, and Plague, and Famine still
Heap'd corpse on corpse, as in autumnal woods
The frosts of many a wind with dead leaves fill
Earth's cold and sullen brooks; in silence, still
The pale survivors stood; ere noon, the fear
Of Hell became a panic, which did kill
Like hunger or disease, with whispers drear,
As « Hush! hark! Come they yet? Just Heaven! thine hour is near!»

XLV.

And Priests rush'd through their ranks, some counterfeiting
The rage they did inspire, some mad indeed
With their own lies; they said their god was waiting
To see his enemies writhe, and burn, and bleed,—
And that, till then, the snakes of Hell had need
Of human souls:—three hundred furnaces
Soon blazed through the wide City, where with speed,
Men brought their infidel kindred to appease
God's wrath, and while they burn'd, knelt round on quivering knees.

XLVI.

The noontide sun was darken'd with that smoke,
The winds of eve dispersed those ashes grey,
The madness which these rites had lull'd, awoke
Again at sunset.—Who shall dare to say
The deeds which night and fear brought forth, or weigh
In balance just the good and evil there?
He might man's deep and searchless heart display,
And cast a light on those dim labyrinths, where
Hope, near imagined chasms, is struggling with despair.

XLVII.

'T is said, a mother dragg'd three children then,
To those fierce flames which roast the eyes in the head,
And laugh'd and died; and that unholy men,
Feasting like fiends upon the infidel dead,
Look'd from their meal, and saw an Angel tread
The visible floor of Heaven, and it was she!
And, on that night, one without doubt or dread
Came to the fire, and said, « Stop, I am he!
Kill me!» they burn'd them both with hellish mockery.

XLVIII.

And, one by one, that night, young maidens came,
Beauteous and calm, like shapes of living stone
Clothed in the light of dreams, and by the flame
Which shrank as overgorged, they laid them down,
And sung a slow sweet song, of which alone
One word was heard, and that was Liberty;
And that some kiss'd their marble feet, with moan
Like love, and died, and then that they did die
With happy smiles, which sunk in white tranquillity.

CANTO XI.

I.

She saw me not—she heard me not—alone
Upon the mountain's dizzy brink she stood;
She spake not, breathed not, moved not—there was thrown
Over her look, the shadow of a mood
Which only clothes the heart in solitude,
A thought of voiceless depth;—she stood alone;
Above, the Heavens were spread;—below, the flood
Was murmuring in its caves;—the wind had blown
Her hair apart, thro' which her eyes and forehead shone.

II.

A cloud was hanging o'er the western mountains;
Before its blue and moveless depth were flying
Grey mists pour'd forth from the unresting fountains
Of darkness in the North:—the day was dying:—
Sudden, the sun shone forth, its beams were lying
Like boiling gold on Ocean, strange to see,
And on the shatter'd vapours, which defying
The power of light in vain, toss'd restlessly
In the red Heaven, like wrecks in a tempestuous sea.

III.

It was a stream of living beams, whose bank
On either side by the cloud's cleft was made;
And where its chasms that flood of glory drank,
Its waves gush'd forth like fire, and as if swayed
By some mute tempest, roll'd on *her;* the shade
Of her bright image floated on the river
Of liquid light, which then did end and fade—
Her radiant shape upon its verge did shiver;
Aloft, her flowing hair like strings of flame did quiver.

IV.

I stood beside her, but she saw me not—
She look'd upon the sea, and skies, and earth;
Rapture, and love, and admiration wrought
A passion deeper far than tears, or mirth,
Or speech, or gesture, or whate'er has birth
From common joy; which, with the speechless feeling
That led her there united, and shot forth
From her far eyes, a light of deep revealing,
All but her dearest self from my regard concealing.

V.

Her lips were parted, and the measured breath
Was now heard there;—her dark and intricate eyes
Orb within orb, deeper than sleep or death,
Absorb'd the glories of the burning skies,
Which, mingling with her heart's deep ecstacies,
Burst from her looks and gestures;—and a light
Of liquid tenderness like love, did rise
From her whole frame, an atmosphere which quite
Array'd her in its beams, tremulous and soft and bright.

VI.

She would have clasp'd me to her glowing frame;
Those warm and odorous lips might soon have shed
On mine the fragrance and the invisible flame
Which now the cold winds stole;—she would have laid
Upon my languid heart her dearest head;
I might have heard her voice, tender and sweet;
Her eyes mingling with mine, might soon have fed
My soul with their own joy.—One moment yet
I gazed—we parted then, never again to meet!

VII.

Never but once to meet on Earth again!
She heard me as I fled—her eager tone
Sunk on my heart, and almost wove a chain
Around my will to link it with her own,
So that my stern resolve was almost gone.
« I cannot reach thee! whither dost thou fly?
My steps are faint—Come back, thou dearest one—
Return, ah me! return»—the wind past by
On which those accents died, faint, far, and lingeringly.

VIII.

Woe! woe! that moonless midnight—Want and Pest
Were horrible, but one more fell doth rear,
As in a hydra's swarming lair, its crest
Eminent among those victims—even the Fear
Of Hell: each girt by the hot atmosphere
Of his blind agony, like a scorpion stung
By his own rage upon his burning bier
Of circling coals of fire; but still there clung
One hope, like a keen sword on starting threads uphung:

IX.

Not death—death was no more refuge or rest;
Not life—it was despair to be!—not sleep,
For fiends and chasms of fire had dispossest
All natural dreams: to wake was not to weep,
But to gaze mad and pallid, at the leap
To which the Future, like a snaky scourge,
Or like some tyrant's eye, which aye doth keep
Its withering beam upon his slaves, did urge
Their steps; they heard the roar of Hell's sulphurcous surge.

X.

Each of that multitude alone, and lost
To sense of outward things, one hope yet knew;
As on a foam-girt crag some seaman tost,
Stares at the rising tide, or like the crew
Whilst now the ship is splitting through and through;
Each, if the tramp of a far steed was heard,
Started from sick despair, or if there flew
One murmur on the wind, or if some word
Which none can gather yet, the distant crowd has stirred.

XI.

Why became cheeks wan with the kiss of death
Paler from hope? they had sustained despair.
Why watch'd those myriads with suspended breath
Sleepless a second night? they are not here
The victims, and hour by hour, a vision drear,
Warm corpses fall upon the clay-cold dead;
And even in death their lips are wreathed with fear.—
The crowd is mute and moveless—overhead
Silent Arcturus shines—ha! hear'st thou not the tread

XII.

Of rushing feet? laughter? the shout, the scream,
Of triumph not to be contain'd? see! hark!
They come, they come, give way! alas, ye deem
Falsely—'t is but a crowd of maniacs stark
Driven, like a troop of spectres, through the dark,
From the choked well, whence a bright death-fire sprung,
A lurid earth-star, which dropped many a spark
From its blue train, and spreading widely, clung
To their wild hair, like mist the topmost pines among.

XIII.

And many from the crowd collected there,
Join'd that strange dance in fearful sympathies;
There was the silence of a long despair,
When the last echo of those terrible cries
Came from a distant street, like agonies
Stifled afar.—Before the Tyrant's throne
All night his aged Senate sate, their eyes
In stony expectation fix'd; when one
Sudden before them stood, a Stranger and alone.

XIV.

Dark Priests and haughty Warriors gazed on him
With baffled wonder, for a hermit's vest
Conceal'd his face; but when he spake, his tone,
Ere yet the matter did their thoughts arrest,
Earnest, benignant, calm, as from a breast
Void of all hate or terror, made them start;
For as with gentle accents he address'd
His speech to them, on each unwilling heart
Unusual awe did fall—a spirit-quelling dart.

XV.

« Ye Princes of the Earth, ye sit aghast
Amid the ruin which yourselves have made;
Yes, desolation heard your trumpet's blast,
And sprang from sleep!—dark Terror has obeyed
Your bidding—O, that I whom ye have made
Your foe, could set my dearest enemy free
From pain and fear! but evil casts a shade,
Which cannot pass so soon, and Hate must be
The nurse and parent still of an ill progeny.

XVI.

« Ye turn to Heaven for aid in your distress;
Alas, that ye, though mighty and the wise,
Who, if he dared, might not aspire to less
Than ye conceive of power, should fear the lies
Which thou, and thou, didst frame for mysteries
To blind your slaves:—consider your own thought,
An empty and a cruel sacrifice
Ye now prepare, for a vain idol wrought
Out of the fears and hate which vain desires have brought.

XVII.

« Ye seek for happiness—alas, the day!
Ye find it not in luxury nor in gold,
Nor in the fame, nor in the envied sway
For which, O willing slaves to Custom old!
Severe task-mistress! ye your hearts have sold.
Ye seek for peace, and when ye die, to dream
No evil dreams: all mortal things are cold
And senseless then; if aught survive, I deem
It must be love and joy, for they immortal seem.

XVIII.

« Fear not the future, weep not for the past.
O, could I win your ears to dare be now
Glorious, and great, and calm! that ye would cast
Into the dust those symbols of your woe,
Purple, and gold, and steel! that ye would go
Proclaiming to the nations whence ye came,
That Want, and Plague, and Fear, from slavery flow;
And that mankind is free, and that the shame
Of royalty and faith is lost in freedom's fame.

XIX.

« If thus 't is well—if not, I come to say
That Laon»—while the Stranger spoke, among
The Council sudden tumult and affray
Arose, for many of those warriors young
Had on his eloquent accents fed and hung
Like bees on mountain-flowers; they knew the truth,
And from their thrones in vindication sprung;
The men of faith and law then without ruth
Drew forth their secret steel, and stabbed each ardent youth.

XX.

They stabb'd them in the back and sneer'd—a slave
Who stood behind the throne, those corpses drew
Each to its bloody, dark and secret grave;
And one more daring raised his steel anew
To pierce the Stranger: « What hast thou to do
With me, poor wretch?»—Calm, solemn, and severe,
That voice unstrung his sinews, and he threw
His dagger on the ground, and pale with fear,
Sate silently—his voice then did the Stranger rear.

XXI.

« It doth avail not that I weep for ye—
Ye cannot change, since ye are old and grey,
And ye have chosen your lot—your fame must be
A book of blood, whence in a milder day
Men shall learn truth, when ye are wrapt in clay:
Now ye shall triumph. I am Laon's friend,
And him to your revenge will I betray,
So you concede one easy boon. Attend!
For now I speak of things which ye can apprehend.

XXII.

« There is a People mighty in its youth,
A land beyond the Oceans of the West,
Where, though with rudest rites, Freedom and Truth
Are worshipp'd; from a glorious mother's breast,
Who, since high Athens fell, among the rest
Sate like the Queen of Nations, but in woe,
By inbred monsters outraged and oppress'd,
Turns to her chainless child for succour now,
It draws the milk of Power in Wisdom's fullest flow.

XXIII.

« That land is like an Eagle, whose young gaze
Feeds on the noontide beam, whose golden plume
Floats moveless on the storm, and in the blaze
Of sun-rise gleams when Earth is wrapt in gloom;
An epitaph of glory for the tomb
Of murder'd Europe may thy fame be made,
Great People: as the sands shalt thou become;
Thy growth is swift as morn, when night must fade;
The multitudinous Earth shall sleep beneath thy shade.

XXIV.

« Yes, in the desert there is built a home
For Freedom. Genius is made strong to rear
The monuments of man beneath the dome
Of a new Heaven; myriads assemble there,
Whom the proud lords of man, in rage or fear,
Drive from their wasted homes: the boon I pray
Is this,—that Cythna shall be convoy'd there—
Nay, start not at the name—America!
And then to you this night Laon will I betray.

XXV.

« With me do what ye will. I am your foe! »
The light of such a joy as makes the stare
Of hungry snakes like living emeralds glow,
Shone in a hundred human eyes—« Where, where
Is Laon? haste! fly! drag him swiftly here!
We grant thy boon. »—« I put no trust in ye,
Swear by the Power ye dread. »—« We swear, we swear! »
The Stranger threw his vest back suddenly,
And smiled in gentle pride, and said, « Lo! I am he! »

CANTO XII.

I.

The transport of a fierce and monstrous gladness
Spread through the multitudinous streets, fast flying
Upon the winds of fear; from his dull madness
The starveling waked, and died in joy; the dying,
Among the corpses in stark agony lying,
Just heard the happy tidings, and in hope
Closed their faint eyes; from house to house replying
With loud acclaim, the living shook Heaven's cope,
And fill'd the startled Earth with echoes: morn did ope

II.

Its pale eyes then; and lo! the long array
Of guards in golden arms, and priests beside,
Singing their bloody hymns, whose garbs betray
The blackness of the faith it seems to hide;
And see, the tyrant's gem-wrought chariot glide
Among the gloomy cowls and glittering spears—
A shape of light is sitting by his side,
A child most beautiful. I' the midst appears
Laon,—exempt alone from mortal hopes and fears.

III.

His head and feet are bare, his hands are bound
Behind with heavy chains, yet none do wreak
Their scoffs on him, though myriads throng around;
There are no sneers upon his lip which speak
That scorn or hate hath made him bold; his cheek
Resolve has not turn'd pale,—his eyes are mild
And calm, and like the morn about to break,
Smile on mankind—his heart seems reconciled
To all things and itself, like a reposing child.

IV.

Tumult was in the soul of all beside,
Ill joy, or doubt, or fear; but those who saw
Their tranquil victim pass, felt wonder glide
Into their brain, and became calm with awe.
See, the slow pageant near the pile doth draw.
A thousand torches in the spacious square,
Borne by the ready slaves of ruthless law,
Await the signal round: the morning fair
Is changed to a dim night by that unnatural glare.

V.

And see! beneath a sun-bright canopy,
Upon a platform level with the pile,
The anxious Tyrant sit, enthroned on high,
Girt by the chieftains of the host; all smile
In expectation, but one child: the while
I, Laon, led by mutes, ascend my bier
Of fire, and look around; each distant isle
Is dark in the bright dawn; towers far and near
Pierce like reposing flames the tremulous atmosphere.

VI.

There was such silence through the host, as when
An earthquake trampling on some populous town,
Has crush'd ten thousand with one tread, and men
Expect the second! all were mute but one,
That fairest child, who, bold with love, alone
Stood up before the king, without avail,
Pleading for Laon's life—her stifled groan
Was heard—she trembled like one aspin pale
Among the gloomy pines of a Norwegian vale.

VII.

What were his thoughts link'd in the morning sun,
Among those reptiles, stingless with delay,
Even like a tyrant's wrath?—the signal-gun
Roar'd—hark, again! in that dread pause he lay
As in a quiet dream—the slaves obey—
A thousand torches drop,—and hark, the last
Bursts on that awful silence; far away
Millions, with hearts that beat both loud and fast,
Watch for the springing flame expectant and aghast.

VIII.

They fly—the torches fall—a cry of fear
Has startled the triumphant!—they recede!
For ere the cannon's roar has died, they hear
The tramp of hoofs like earthquake, and a steed
Dark and gigantic, with the tempest's speed,
Bursts through their ranks: a woman sits thereon,
Fairer it seems than aught that earth can breed,
Calm, radiant, like the phantom of the dawn,
A spirit from the caves of day-light wandering gone.

IX.

All thought it was God's Angel come to sweep
The lingering guilty to their fiery grave;
The tyrant from his throne in dread did leap,—
Her innocence his child from fear did save;
Scared by the faith they feign'd, each priestly slave
Knelt for his mercy whom they served with blood,
And, like the refluence of a mighty wave
Suck'd into the loud sea, the multitude
With crushing panic, fled in terror's alter'd mood.

X.

They pause, they blush, they gaze,—a gathering shout
Bursts like one sound from the ten thousand streams
Of a tempestuous sea:—that sudden rout
One check'd who, never in his mildest dreams
Felt awe from grace or loveliness, the seams
Of his rent heart so hard and cold a creed
Had sear'd with blistering ice—but he misdeems
That he is wise, whose wounds do only bleed
Inly for self, thus thought the Iberian Priest indeed,

XI.

And others, too, thought he was wise to see,
In pain, and fear, and hate, something divine
In love and beauty—no divinity.—
Now with a bitter smile, whose light did shine
Like a fiend's hope upon his lips and eyne,
He said, and the persuasion of that sneer
Rallied his trembling comrades—« Is it mine
To stand alone, when kings and soldiers fear
A woman? Heaven has sent its other victim here.»

XII.

« Were it not impious,» said the King, « to break
Our holy oath?»—« Impious to keep it, say!»
Shriek'd the exulting Priest—« Slaves, to the stake
Bind her, and on my head the burthen lay
Of her just torments:—at the Judgment Day
Will I stand up before the golden throne
Of Heaven, and cry, to thee did I betray
An Infidel; but for me she would have known
Another moment's joy! the glory be thine own.»

XIII.

They trembled, but replied not, nor obey'd,
Pausing in breathless silence. Cythna sprung
From her gigantic steed, who, like a shade
Chased by the winds, those vacant streets among
Fled tameless, as the brazen rein she flung
Upon his neck, and kiss'd his mooned brow.
A piteous sight, that one so fair and young,
The clasp of such a fearful death should woo
With smiles of tender joy as beam'd from Cythna now.

XIV.

The warm tears burst in spite of faith and fear,
From many a tremulous eye, but like soft dews
Which feed spring's earliest buds, hung gather'd there,
Frozen by doubt,—alas, they could not chuse
But weep; for when her faint limbs did refuse
To climb the pyre, upon the mutes she smiled;
And with her eloquent gestures, and the hues
Of her quick lips, even as a weary child
Wins sleep from some fond nurse with its caresses mild,

XV.

She won them, though unwilling, her to bind
Near me, among the snakes. When then had fled
One soft reproach that was most thrilling kind,
She smiled on me, and nothing then we said,
But each upon the other's countenance fed
Looks of insatiate love; the mighty veil
Which doth divide the living and the dead
Was almost rent, the world grew dim and pale,—
All light in Heaven or Earth beside our love did fail.—

XVI.

Yet,—yet—one brief relapse, like the last beam
Of dying flames, the stainless air around
Hung silent and serene—a blood-red gleam
Burst upwards, hurling fiercely from the ground
The globed smoke,—I heard the mighty sound
Of its uprise, like a tempestuous ocean;
And, through its chasms I saw, as in a swound,
The tyrant's child fall without life or motion
Before his throne, subdued by some unseen emotion.

XVII.

And is this death? the pyre has disappear'd,
The Pestilence, the Tyrant, and the throng;
The flames grow silent—slowly there is heard
The music of a breath-suspending song,
Which, like the kiss of love when life is young,
Steeps the faint eyes in darkness sweet and deep;
With ever changing notes it floats along,
Till on my passive soul there seem'd to creep
A melody, like waves on wrinkled sands that leap.

XVIII.

The warm touch of a soft and tremulous hand
Waken'd me then; lo, Cythna sate reclined
Beside me, on the waved and golden sand
Of a clear pool, upon a bank o'ertwined
With strange and star-bright flowers, which to the wind
Breathed divine odour; high above, was spread
The emerald heaven of trees of unknown kind,
Whose moonlike blooms and bright fruit overhead
A shadow, which was light, upon the waters shed.

XIX.

And round about sloped many a lawny mountain
With incense-bearing forests, and vast caves
Of marble radiance to that mighty fountain;
And where the flood its own bright margin laves,
Their echoes talk with its eternal waves,
Which, from the depths whose jagged caverns breed
Their unreposing strife, it lifts and heaves,—
Till through a chasm of hills they roll, and feed
A river deep, which flies with smooth but arrowy speed.

XX.

As we sate gazing in a trance of wonder,
A boat approach'd, borne by the musical air
Along the waves which sung and sparkled under
Its rapid keel—a winged shape sate there,
A child with silver-shining wings, so fair,
That as her bark did through the waters glide,
The shadow of the lingering waves did wear
Light, as from starry beams; from side to side,
While veering to the wind her plumes the bark did guide.

XXI.

The boat was one curved shell of hollow pearl,
Almost translucent with the light divine
Of her within; the prow and stern did curl
Horn'd on high, like the young moon supine,
When o'er dim twilight mountains dark with pine,
It floats upon the sunset's sea of beams,
Whose golden waves in many a purple line
Fade fast, till borne on sunlight's ebbing streams,
Dilating, on earth's verge the sunken meteor gleams.

XXII.

Its keel has struck the sands beside our feet;—
Then Cythna turn'd to me, and from her eyes
Which swam with unshed tears, a look more sweet
Than happy love, a wild and glad surprise,
Glanced as she spake; « Aye, this is Paradise
And not a dream, and we are all united!
Lo, that is mine own child, who in the guise
Of madness came, like day to one benighted
In lonesome woods: my heart is now too well requited!»

XXIII.

And then she wept aloud, and in her arms
Clasp'd that bright Shape, less marvellously fair
Than her own human hues and living charms;
Which, as she lean'd in passion's silence there,
Breathed warmth on the cold bosom of the air,
Which seem'd to blush and tremble with delight;
The glossy darkness of her streaming hair
Fell o'er that snowy child, and wrapt from sight
The fond and long embrace which did their hearts unite.

XXIV.

Then the bright child, the plumed Seraph came,
And fix'd its blue and beaming eyes on mine,
And said, « I was disturb'd by tremulous shame
When once we met, yet knew that I was thine
From the same hour in which thy lips divine
Kindled a clinging dream within my brain,
Which ever waked when I might sleep, to twine
Thine image with *her* memory dear—again
We meet, exempted now from mortal fear or pain.

XXV.

« When the consuming flames had wrapt ye round,
The hope which I had cherish'd went away;
I fell in agony on the senseless ground,
And hid mine eyes in dust, and far astray
My mind was gone, when bright, like dawning day,
The Spectre of the Plague before me flew,
And breathed upon my lips, and seem'd to say,
'They wait for thee beloved;'—then I knew
The death-mark on my breast, and became calm anew.

XXVI.

« It was the calm of love—for I was dying.
I saw the black and half-extinguish'd pyre
In its own grey and shrunken ashes lying;
The pitchy smoke of the departed fire
Still hung in many a hollow dome and spire
Above the towers like night; beneath whose shade
Awed by the ending of their own desire
The armies stood; a vacancy was made
In expectation's depth, and so they stood dismay'd.

XXVII.

« The frightful silence of that alter'd mood,
The tortures of the dying clove alone,
Till one uprose among the multitude,
And said—'The flood of time is rolling on,
We stand upon its brink, whilst *they* are gone
To glide in peace down death's mysterious stream.
Have ye done well? they moulder flesh and bone,
Who might have made this life's envenom'd dream
A sweeter draught than ye will ever taste, I deem.

XXVIII.

« 'These perish as the good and great of yore
Have perish'd, and their murderers will repent,
Yes, vain and barren tears shall flow before
Yon smoke has faded from the firmament,
Even for this cause, that ye who must lament
The death of those that made this world so fair,
Cannot recall them now; but then is lent
To man the wisdom of a high despair,
When such can die, and he live on and linger here.

XXIX.

« 'Aye, ye may fear not now the Pestilence,
From fabled hell as by a charm withdrawn,
All power and faith must pass, since calmly hence
In pain and fire have unbelievers gone;
And ye must sadly turn away, and moan
In secret, to his home each one returning,
And to long ages shall this hour be known;
And slowly shall its memory, ever burning,
Fill this dark night of things with an eternal morning.

XXX.

« ' For me the world is grown too void and cold,
Since hope pursues immortal destiny
With steps thus slow—therefore shall ye behold
How those who love, yet fear not, dare to die;
Tell to your children this!' then suddenly
He sheathed a dagger in his heart and fell;
My brain grew dark in death, and yet to me
There came a murmur from the crowd, to tell
Of deep and mighty change which suddenly befell.

XXXI.

« Then suddenly I stood a winged Thought
Before the immortal Senate, and the seat
Of that star-shining spirit, whence is wrought
The strength of its dominion, good and great,
The better Genius of this world's estate.
His realm around one mighty Fane is spread,
Elysian islands bright and fortunate,
Calm dwellings of the free and happy dead,
Where I am sent to lead!» these winged words she said,

XXXII.

And with the silence of her eloquent smile,
Bade us embark in her divine canoe;
Then at the helm we took our seat, the while
Above her head those plumes of dazzling hue
Into the winds' invisible stream she threw,
Sitting beside the prow: like gossamer,
On the swift breath of morn, the vessel flew
O'er the bright whirlpools of that fountain fair,
Whose shores receded fast, whilst we seem'd lingering there;

XXXIII.

Till down that mighty stream dark, calm, and fleet,
Between a chasm of cedar mountains riven,
Chased by the thronging winds whose viewless feet
As swift as twinkling beams, had, under Heaven,
From woods and waves wild sounds and odours driven,
The boat fled visibly—three nights and days,
Borne like a cloud through morn, and noon, and even,
We sail'd along the winding watery ways
Of the vast stream, a long and labyrinthine maze.

XXXIV.

A scene of joy and wonder to behold
That river's shapes and shadows changing ever,
Where the broad sunrise, fill'd with deepening gold,
Its whirlpools, where all hues did spread and quiver,
And where melodious falls did burst and shiver
Among rocks clad with flowers, the foam and spray
Sparkled like stars upon the sunny river,
Or when the moonlight pour'd a holier day,
One vast and glittering lake around green islands lay.

XXXV.

Morn, noon, and even, that boat of pearl outran
The streams which bore it, like the arrowy cloud
Of tempest, or the speedier thought of man,
Which flieth forth and cannot make abode.
Sometimes through forests, deep like night, we glode,
Between the walls of mighty mountains crown'd
With Cyclopean piles, whose turrets proud,
The homes of the departed, dimly frown'd
O'er the bright waves which girt their dark foundations round.

XXXVI.

Sometimes between the wide and flowering meadows,
Mile after mile we sail'd, and 't was delight
To see far off the sunbeams chase the shadows
Over the grass; sometimes beneath the night
Of wide and vaulted caves, whose roofs were bright
With starry gems, we fled, whilst from their deep
And dark-green chasms, shades beautiful and white,
Amid sweet sounds across our path would sweep,
Like swift and lovely dreams that walk the waves of sleep.

XXXVII.

And ever as we sail'd, our minds were full
Of love and wisdom, which would overflow
In converse wild, and sweet, and wonderful;
And in quick smiles whose light would come and go,
Like music o'er wide waves, and in the flow
Of sudden tears, and in the mute caress—
For a deep shade was cleft, and we did know,
That virtue, though obscured on Earth, not less
Survives all mortal change in lasting loveliness.

XXXVIII.

Three days and nights we sail'd, as thought and feeling
Number delightful hours—for through the sky
The sphered lamps of day and night, revealing
New changes and new glories, roll'd on high,
Sun, Moon, and moonlike lamps, the progeny
Of a diviner Heaven, serene and fair:
On the fourth day, wild as a wind-wrought sea
The stream became, and fast and faster bare
The spirit-winged boat, steadily speeding there.

XXXIX.

Steadily and swift, where the waves roll'd like mountains
Within the vast ravine, whose rifts did pour
Tumultuous floods from their ten thousand fountains,
The thunder of whose earth-uplifting roar
Made the air sweep in whirlwinds from the shore,
Calm as a shade, the boat of that fair child
Securely fled, that rapid stress before,
Amid the topmost spray, and sunbows wild,
Wreathed in the silver mist: in joy and pride we smiled.

XL.

The torrent of that wide and raging river
Is past, and our aërial speed suspended.
We look behind; a golden mist did quiver
When its wild surges with the lake were blended:
Our bark hung there, as one line suspended
Between two heavens, that windless waveless lake;
Which four great cataracts from four vales, attended
By mists, aye feed; from rocks and clouds they break,
And of that azure sea a silent refuge make.

XLI.

Motionless resting on the lake awhile,
I saw its marge of snow-bright mountains rear
Their peaks aloft, I saw each radiant isle,
And in the midst, afar, even like a sphere
Hung in one hollow sky, did there appear
The Temple of the Spirit; on the sound
Which issued thence, drawn nearer and more near,
Like the swift moon this glorious earth around,
The charmed boat approached, and there its haven found.

The Cenci.

A TRAGEDY IN FIVE ACTS.

DEDICATION.

TO LEIGH HUNT, ESQ.

My dear Friend,

I inscribe with your name, from a distant country, and after an absence whose months have seemed years, this the latest of my literary efforts.

Those writings which I have hitherto published, have been little else than visions which impersonate my own apprehensions of the beautiful and the just. I can also perceive in them the literary defects incidental to youth and impatience; they are dreams of what ought to be, or may be. The drama which I now present to you is a sad reality. I lay aside the presumptuous attitude of an instructor, and am content to paint, with such colours as my own heart furnishes, that which has been.

Had I known a person more highly endowed than yourself with all that it becomes a man to possess, I had solicited for this work the ornament of his name. One more gentle, honourable, innocent and brave; one of more exalted toleration for all who do and think evil, and yet himself more free from evil; one who knows better how to receive, and how to confer a benefit though he must ever confer far more than he can receive; one of simpler, and, in the highest sense of the word, of purer life and manners I never knew: and I had already been fortunate in friendships when your name was added to the list.

In that patient and irreconcileable enmity with domestic and political tyranny and imposture which the tenor of your life has illustrated, and which, had I health and talents should illustrate mine, let us, comforting each other in our task, live and die.

All happiness attend you!

Your affectionate friend,

Percy B. Shelley.

Rome, May 29, 1819.

PREFACE.

A manuscript was communicated to me during my travels in Italy which was copied from the archives of the Cenci Palace at Rome, and contains a detailed account of the horrors which ended in the extinction of one of the noblest and richest families of that city during the Pontificate of Clement VIII, in the year, 1599. The story is, that an old man having spent his life in debauchery and wickedness, conceived at length an implacable hatred towards his children; which showed itself towards one daughter under the form of an incestuous passion, aggravated by every circumstance of cruelty and violence. This daughter, after long and vain attempts to escape from what she considered a perpetual contamination both of body and mind, at length plotted with her mother-in-law and brother to murder their common tyrant. The young maiden, who was urged to this tremendous deed by an impulse which overpowered its horror, was evidently a most gentle and amiable being; a creature formed to adorn and be admired, and thus violently thwarted from her nature by the necessity of circumstance and opinion. The deed was quickly discovered; and in spite of the most earnest prayers made to the Pope by the highest persons in Rome, the criminals were put to death. The old man had during his life repeatedly bought his pardon from the Pope for capital crimes of the most enormous and unspeakable kind, at the price of a hundred thousand crowns; the death therefore of his victims can scarcely be accounted for by the love of justice. The Pope, among other motives for severity, probably felt that whoever killed the Count Cenci deprived his treasury of a certain and copious source of revenue. The Papal Government formerly took the most extraordinary precautions against the publicity of facts which offer so tragical a demonstration of its own wickedness and weakness; so that the communication of the M. S. had become, until very lately, a matter of some difficulty. Such a story, if told so as to present to the reader all the feelings of those who once acted it, their hopes and fears, their confidences and misgivings, their various interests, passions and opinions, acting upon and with each other, yet all conspiring to one tremendous end, would be as a light to make apparent some of the most dark and secret caverns of the human heart.

On my arrival at Rome I found that the story of the Cenci was a subject not to be mentioned in Italian society without awakening a deep and breathless interest; and that the feelings of the company never failed to incline to a romantic pity for the wrongs, and a passionate exculpation of the horrible deed to which they urged her, who has been mingled two centuries with the common dust. All ranks of people knew the outlines of this history, and participated in the overwhelming interest which it seems to have the magic of exciting in the human heart. I had a copy of Guido's picture of Beatrice which is preserved in the Colonna Palace, and my servant instantly recognized it as the portrait of *La Cenci*.

This national and universal interest which the story produces and has produced for two centuries, and among all ranks of people in a great City, where the imagination is kept for ever active and awake, first suggested to me the conception of its fitness for a dramatic purpose. In fact it is a tragedy which has already received, from its capacity of awakening and sustaining the sympathy of men, approbation and success. Nothing remained, as I imagined, but to clothe it to the apprehensions of my countrymen in such language and action as would bring it home to their hearts. The deepest and the

sublimest tragic compositions, King Lear and the two plays in which the tale of OEdipus is told, were stories which already existed in tradition, as matters of popular belief and interest, before Shakspeare and Sophocles made them familiar to the sympathy of all succeeding generations of mankind.

This story of the Cenci is indeed eminently fearful and monstrous: any thing like a dry exhibition of it on the stage would be insupportable. The person who would treat such a subject must increase the ideal, and diminish the actual horror of the events, so that the pleasure which arises from the poetry which exists in these tempestuous sufferings and crimes, may mitigate the pain of the contemplation of the moral deformity from which they spring. There must also be nothing attempted to make the exhibition subservient to what is vulgarly termed a moral purpose. The highest moral purpose aimed at in the highest species of the drama, is the teaching the human heart, through its sympathies and antipathies, the knowledge of itself; in proportion to the possession of which knowledge, every human being is wise, just, sincere, tolerant, and kind. If dogmas can do more, it is well: but a drama is no fit place for the enforcement of them. Undoubtedly, no person can be truly dishonoured by the act of another; and the fit return to make to the most enormous injuries is kindness and forbearance, and a resolution to convert the injurer from his dark passions by peace and love. Revenge, retaliation, atonement, are pernicious mistakes. If Beatrice had thought in this manner she would have been wiser and better; but she would never have been a tragic character: the few whom such an exhibition would have interested, could never have been sufficiently interested for a dramatic purpose, from the want of finding sympathy in their interest among the mass who surround them. It is in the restless and anatomizing casuistry with which men seek the justification of Beatrice, yet feel that she has done what needs justification; it is in the superstitious horror with which they contemplate alike her wrongs and their revenge, that the dramatic character of what she did and suffered consists.

I have endeavoured as nearly as possible to represent the characters as they probably were, and have sought to avoid the error of making them actuated by my own conceptions of right or wrong, false or true: thus under a thin veil converting names and actions of the sixteenth century into cold impersonations of my own mind. They are represented as Catholics, and as Catholics deeply tinged with religion. To a protestant apprehension there will appear something unnatural in the earnest and perpetual sentiment of the relations between God and man which pervade the tragedy of the Cenci. It will especially be startled at the combination of an undoubting persuasion of the truth of the popular religion, with a cool and determined perseverance in enormous guilt. But religion in Italy is not, as in protestant countries, a cloak to be worn on particular days; or a passport which those who do not wish to be railed at carry with them to exhibit; or a gloomy passion for penetrating the impenetrable mysteries of our being, which terrifies its possessor at the darkness of the abyss to the brink of which it has conducted him. Religion co-exists, as it were, in the mind of an Italian Catholic with a faith in that of which all men have the most certain knowledge. It is interwoven with the whole fabric of life. It is adoration, faith, submission, penitence, blind admiration; not a rule for moral conduct. It has no necessary connexion with any one virtue. The most atrocious villain may be rigidly devout, and, without any shock to established faith, confess himself to be so. Religion pervades intensely the whole frame of society, and is, according to the temper of the mind which it inhabits, a passion, a persuasion, an excuse; a refuge: never a check. Cenci himself built a chapel in the court of his Palace, and dedicated it to St Thomas the Apostle, and established masses for the peace of his soul. Thus in the first scene of the fourth act Lucretia's design in exposing herself to the consequences of an expostulation with Cenci after having administered the opiate, was to induce him by a feigned tale to confess himself before death; this being esteemed by Catholics as essential to salvation; and she only relinquishes her purpose when she perceives that her perseverance would expose Beatrice to new outrages.

I have avoided with great care in writing this play the introduction of what is commonly called mere poetry, and I imagine there will scarcely be found a detached simile or a single isolated description, unless Beatrice's description of the chasm appointed for her father's murder should be judged to be of that nature.[1]

In a dramatic composition the imagery and the passion should interpenetrate one another, the former being reserved simply for the full development and illustration of the latter. Imagination is as the immortal God which should assume flesh for the redemption of mortal passion. It is thus that the most remote and the most familiar imagery may alike be fit for dramatic purposes when employed in the illustration of strong feeling, which raises what is low, and levels to the apprehension that which is lofty, casting over all the shadow of its own greatness. In other respects I have written more carelessly; that is, without an over-fastidious and learned choice of words. In this respect I entirely agree with those modern critics who assert, that in order to move men to true sympathy we must use the familiar language of men; and that our great ancestors the ancient English poets are the writers, a study of whom might incite us to do that for our own age which they have done for theirs. But it must be the real language of men in general and not that of any particular class to whose society the writer happens to belong. So much for what I have attempted: I need not be assured that success is a very different matter; particularly for one whose attention has but newly been awakened to the study of dramatic literature.

I endeavoured whilst at Rome to observe such monuments of this story as might be accessible to a stranger. The portrait of Beatrice at the Colonna Palace is most admirable as a work of art: it was taken by Guido during her confinement in prison. But it is most interesting as a just representation of one of the loveliest specimens of the workmanship of Nature. There is a fixed and pale composure upon the features: she seems sad and stricken down in spirit, yet the despair thus expressed is lightened by the patience of gentleness. Her head is bound with folds of white drapery, from which the yellow strings of her golden hair escape, and fall about her neck. The moulding of her face is exquisitely delicate; the eye-brows

[1] An idea in this speech was suggested by a most sublime passage in «El Purgatorio de San Patricio» of Calderon: the only plagiarism which I have intentionally committed in the whole piece.

are distinct and arched: the lips have that permanent meaning of imagination and sensibility which suffering has not repressed, and which it seems as if death scarcely could extinguish. Her forehead is large and clear; her eyes, which we are told were remarkable for their vivacity, are swollen with weeping and lustreless, but beautifully tender and serene. In the whole mien there is a simplicity and dignity which, united with her exquisite loveliness and deep sorrow, are inexpressibly pathetic. Beatrice Cenci appears to have been one of those rare persons in whom energy and gentleness dwell together without destroying one another: her nature was simple and profound. The crimes and miseries in which she was an actor and a sufferer are as the mask and the mantle in which circumstances clothed her for her impersonation on the scene of the world.

The Cenci Palace is of great extent; and though in part modernized, there yet remains a vast and gloomy pile of feudal architecture in the same state as during the dreadful scenes which are the subject of this tragedy. The Palace is situated in an obscure corner of Rome, near the quarter of the Jews, and from the upper windows you see the immense ruins of Mount Palatine half hidden under their profuse overgrowth of trees. There is a court in one part of the palace (perhaps that in which Cenci built the Chapel to St Thomas), supported by granite columns and adorned with antique friezes of fine workmanship, and built up, according to the ancient Italian fashion, with balcony over balcony of open work. One of the gates of the palace formed of immense stones and leading through a passage, dark and lofty and opening into gloomy subterranean chambers, struck me particularly.

Of the Castle of Petrella, I could obtain no further information than that which is to be found in the manuscript.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

Count Francesco Cenci.
Giacomo, Bernardo, *His sons.*
Cardinal Camillo.
Orsino, *a Prelate.*
Savella, *the Pope's Legate.*
Olimpio, Marzio, *Assassins.*
Andrea, *servant to Cenci.*
Nobles, Judges, Guards, Servants.

WOMEN.

Lucretia, *Wife of Cenci, and step-mother of his children.*
Beatrice, *his daughter.*

The Scene lies principally in Rome, but changes during the fourth Act to Petrella, a castle among the Apulia Appenines.

Time. During the Pontificate of Clement VIII.

THE CENCI.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

An Apartment in the Cenci *Palace.*

Enter Count Cenci, *and* Cardinal Camillo.

CAMILLO.

That matter of the murder is hush'd up
If you consent to yield his Holiness
Your fief that lies beyond the Pincian gate.—
It needed all my interest in the conclave
To bend him to this point: he said that you
Bought perilous impunity with your gold;
That crimes like yours if once or twice compounded
Enrich'd the Church, and respited from hell
An erring soul which might repent and live:—
But that the glory and the interest
Of the high throne he fills, little consist
With making it a daily mart of guilt
So manifold and hideous as the deeds
Which you scarce hide from men's revolted eyes.

CENCI.

The third of my possessions—let it go!
Aye, I once heard the nephew of the Pope
Had sent his architect to view the ground,
Meaning to build a villa on my vines
The next time I compounded with his uncle:
I little thought he should outwit me so!
Henceforth no witness—not the lamp—shall see
That which the vassal threaten'd to divulge
Whose throat is choked with dust for his reward.
The deed he saw could not have rated higher
That his most worthless life:—it angers me!
Respited from Hell!—So may the Devil
Respite their souls from Heaven. No doubt Pope Clement,
And his most charitable nephews, pray
That the apostle Peter and the saints
Will grant for their sake that I long enjoy
Strength, wealth, and pride, and lust, and length of days
Wherein to act the deeds which are the stewards
Of their revenue.—But much yet remains
To which they show no title.

CAMILLO.

Oh, Count Cenci!
So much that thou might'st honourably live,
And reconcile thyself with thine own heart,
And with thy God, and with the offended world.
How hideously look deeds of lust and blood
Through those snow-white and venerable hairs!—
Your children should be sitting round you now,
But that you fear to read upon their looks
The shame and misery you have written there.
Where is your wife? Where is your gentle daughter?
Methinks her sweet looks, which make all things else
Beauteous and glad, might kill the fiend within you.
Why is she barr'd from all society
But her own strange and uncomplaining wrongs?
Talk with me, Count,—you know I mean you well.
I stood beside your dark and fiery youth
Watching its bold and bad career, as men
Watch meteors, but it vanish'd not—I mark'd
Your desperate and remorseless manhood; now

Do I behold you in dishonour'd age
Charged with a thousand unrepented crimes.
Yet I have ever hoped you would amend,
And in that hope have saved your life three times.

CENCI.

For which Aldobrandino owes you now
My fief beyond the Pincian.—Cardinal,
One thing, I pray you, recollect henceforth,
And so we shall converse with less restraint.
A man you knew spoke of my wife and daughter—
He was accustom'd to frequent my house;
So the next day *his* wife and daughter came
And asked if I had seen him; and I smiled:
I think they never saw him any more.

CAMILLO.

Thou execrable man, beware!—

CENCI.

Of thee?
Nay this is idle:—We should know each other.
As to my character for what men call crime,
Seeing I please my senses as I list,
And vindicate that right with force or guile,
It is a public matter, and I care not
If I discuss it with you. I may speak
Alike to you and my own conscious heart—
For you give out that you have half reform'd me,
Therefore strong vanity will keep you silent
If fear should not; both will, I do not doubt.
All men delight in sensual luxury,
All men enjoy revenge; and most exult
Over the tortures they can never feel—
Flattering their secret peace with others' pain.
But I delight in nothing else. I love
The sight of agony, and the sense of joy,
When this shall be another's, and that mine.
And I have no remorse and little fear,
Which are, I think, the checks of other men.
This mood has grown upon me, until now
Any design my captious fancy makes
The picture of its wish, and it forms none
But such as men like you would start to know,
Is as my natural food and rest debarr'd
Until it be accomplish'd.

CAMILLO.

Art thou not
Most miserable?

CENCI.

Why miserable?—
No.—I am what your theologians call
Harden'd;—which they must be in impudence,
So to revile a man's peculiar taste.
True, I was happier than I am, while yet
Manhood remain'd to act the thing I thought;
While lust was sweeter than revenge; and now
Invention palls:—Aye, we must all grow old—
But that there yet remains a deed to act
Whose horror might make sharp an appetite
Duller than mine—I'd do,—I know not what.
When I was young I thought of nothing else
But pleasure; and I fed on honey sweets:
Men, by St Thomas! cannot live like bees,
And I grew tired:—yet, till I kill'd a foe,
And heard his groans, and heard his children's groans,
Knew I not what delight was else on earth,
Which now delights me little. I the rather
Look on such pangs as terror ill conceals,
The dry fix'd eye-ball; the pale quivering lip,
Which tell me that the spirit weeps within
Tears bitterer than the bloody sweat of Christ.
I rarely kill the body which preserves,
Like a strong prison, the soul within my power,
Wherein I feed it with the breath of fear
For hourly pain.

CAMILLO.

Hell's most abandon'd fiend
Did never, in the drunkenness of guilt,
Speak to his heart as now you speak to me,
I thank my God that I believe you not.

Enter ANDREA.

ANDREA.

My Lord, a gentleman from Salamanca
Would speak with you.

CENCI.

Bid him attend me in the grand saloon.

[*Exit* ANDREA.

CAMILLO

Farewell; and I will pray
Almighty God that thy false, impious words
Tempt not his spirit to abandon thee.

[*Exit* CAMILLO.

CENCI.

The third of my possessions! I must use
Close husbandry, or gold, the old man's sword,
Falls from my wither'd hand. But yesterday
There came an order from the Pope to make
Fourfold provision for my cursed sons;
Whom I have sent from Rome to Salamanca,
Hoping some accident might cut them off;
And meaning, if I could, to starve them there.
I pray thee, God, send some quick death upon them!
Bernardo and my wife could not be worse
If dead and damn'd:—then, as to Beatrice—

[*Looking around him suspiciously.*

I think they cannot hear me at that door;
What if they should? And yet I need not speak
Though the heart triumphs with itself in words.
O, thou most silent air, that shall not hear
What now I think! Thou, pavement, which I tread
Towards her chamber,—let your echoes talk
Of my imperious step scorning surprise,
But not of my intent!—Andrea!

Enter ANDREA.

ANDREA.

My lord?

CENCI.

Bid Beatrice attend me in her chamber
This evening:—no, at midnight and alone.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

A garden of the Cenci Palace.

Enter BEATRICE *and* ORSINO, *as in conversation.*

BEATRICE.

Pervert not truth,
Orsino. You remember where we held
That conversation;—nay, we see the spot
Even from this cypress;—two long years are past
Since, on an April midnight, underneath
The moon-light ruins of Mount Palatine,
I did confess to you my secret mind.

ORSINO.

You said you loved me then.

BEATRICE.

You are a Priest:
Speak to me not of love.

ORSINO.

I may obtain
The dispensation of the Pope to marry.
Because I am a Priest, do you believe
Your image, as the hunter some struck deer,
Follows me not whether I wake or sleep?

BEATRICE.

As I have said, speak to me not of love;
Had you a dispensation, I have not;
Nor will I leave this home of misery
Whilst my poor Bernard, and that gentle lady
To whom I owe life, and these virtuous thoughts,
Must suffer what I still have strength to share.
Alas, Orsino! All the love that once
I felt for you, is turned to bitter pain.
Ours was a youthful contract, which you first
Broke, by assuming vows no Pope will loose.
And yet I love you still, but holily,
Even as a sister or a spirit might;
And so I swear a cold fidelity.
And it is well perhaps we shall not marry.
You have a sly, equivocating vein
That suits me not.—Ah, wretched that I am!
Where shall I turn? Even now you look on me
As you were not my friend, and as if you
Discover'd that I thought so, with false smiles
Making my true suspicion seem your wrong.
Ah! No, forgive me; sorrow makes me seem
Sterner than else my nature might have been;
I have a weight of melancholy thoughts,
And they forebode,—but what can they forebode
Worse than I now endure?

ORSINO.

All will be well.
Is the petition yet prepared? You know
My zeal for all you wish, sweet Beatrice;
Doubt not but I will use my utmost skill
So that the Pope attend to your complaint.

BEATRICE.

Your zeal for all I wish;—Ah me, you are cold!
Your utmost skill—speak but one word—
(*Aside.*) Alas!
Weak and deserted creature that I am,
Here I stand bickering with my only friend!
(*To* ORSINO.)
This night my father gives a sumptuous feast,
Orsino; he has heard some happy news
From Salamanca, from my brothers there,
And with this outward show of love he mocks
His inward hate. 'T is bold hypocrisy
For he would gladlier celebrate their deaths,
Which I have heard him pray for on his knees:
Great God! that such a father should be mine!
But there is mighty preparation made,
And all our kin, the Cenci, will be there,
And all the chief nobility of Rome.
And he has bidden me and my pale Mother
Attire ourselves in festival array.
Poor lady! She expects some happy change
In his dark spirit from this act; I none.
At supper I will give you the petition:
Till when—farewell.

ORSINO.

Farewell.

[*Exit* BEATRICE.

I know the Pope
Will ne'er absolve me from my priestly vow
But by absolving me from the revenue
Of many a wealthy see; and, Beatrice,
I think to win thee at an easier rate.
Nor shall he read her eloquent petition:
He might bestow her on some poor relation
Of his sixth cousin, as he did her sister,
And I should be debarr'd from all access.
Then as to what she suffers from her father,
In all this there is much exaggeration:—
Old men are testy and will have their way;
A man may stab his enemy, or his slave,
And live a free life as to wine or women,
And with a peevish temper may return
To a dull home, and rate his wife and children;
Daughters and wives call this foul tyranny.
I shall be well content if on my conscience
There rest no heavier sin than what they suffer
From the devices of my love—A net
From which she shall escape not. Yet I fear
Her subtle mind, her awe-inspiring gaze,
Whose beams anatomize me nerve by nerve
And lay me bare, and make me blush to see
My hidden thoughts.—Ah, no! A friendless girl
Who clings to me, as to her only hope:—
I were a fool, not less than if a panther
Were panic-stricken by the Antelope's eye,
If she escape me. [*Exit.*

SCENE III.

A magnificent Hall in the Cenci Palace.

A Banquet. Enter CENCI, LUCRETIA, BEATRICE, ORSINO, CAMILLO, NOBLES.

CENCI.

Welcome, my friends and kinsmen; welcome ye,
Princes and Cardinals, Pillars of the church,
Whose presence honours our festivity.
I have too long lived like an Anchorite,
And in my absence from your merry meetings
An evil word is gone abroad of me;
But I do hope that you, my noble friends,
When you have shared the entertainment here,
And heard the pious cause for which 't is given,
And we have pledged a health or two together,
Will think me flesh and blood as well as you;
Sinful indeed, for Adam made all so,
But tender-hearted, meek and pitiful.

FIRST GUEST.

In truth, my Lord, you seem too light of heart,
Too sprightly and companionable a man,
To act the deeds that rumour pins on you.

[*To his companion.*

I never saw such blithe and open cheer
In any eye!

SECOND GUEST.

Some most desired event,
In which we all demand a common joy,
Has brought us hither; let us hear it, Count.

CENCI.

It is indeed a most desired event.
If when a parent from a parent's heart
Lifts from this earth to the great Father of all
A prayer, both when he lays him down to sleep,
And when he rises up from dreaming it;
One supplication, one desire, one hope,
That he would grant a wish for his two sons
Even all that he demands in their regard—
And suddenly beyond his dearest hope,
It is accomplish'd, he should then rejoice,
And call his friends and kinsmen to a feast,
And task their love to grace his merriment,
Then honour me thus far—for I am he.

BEATRICE (*to* LUCRETIA).

Great God! How horrible! Some dreadful ill
Must have befallen my brothers.

LUCRETIA.

Fear not, Child,
He speaks too frankly.

BEATRICE.

Ah! My blood runs cold.
I fear that wicked laughter round his eye,
Which wrinkles up the skin even to the hair.

CENCI.

Here are the letters brought from Salamanca;
Beatrice, read them to your mother. God!
I thank thee! In one night didst thou perform,
By ways inscrutable, the thing I sought.
My disobedient and rebellious sons
Are dead!—Why dead!—What means this change of cheer?
You hear me not, I tell you they are dead;
And they will need no food or raiment more:
The tapers that did light them the dark way
Are their last cost. The Pope, I think, will not
Expect I should maintain them in their coffins.
Rejoice with me—my heart is wondrous glad.

BEATRICE. (LUCRETIA *sinks, half fainting;* BEATRICE *supports her.*)

It is not true!—Dear lady, pray look up.
Had it been true, there is a God in Heaven,
He would not live to boast of such a boon.
Unnatural man, thou knowest that it is false.

CENCI.

Aye, as the word of God; whom here I call
To witness that I speak the sober truth;—
And whose most favouring Providence was shown
Even in the manner of their deaths. For Rocco
Was kneeling at the mass, with sixteen others,
When the Church fell and crush'd him to a mummy,
The rest escaped unhurt. Cristofano
Was stabb'd in error by a jealous man,
Whilst she he loved was sleeping with his rival;
All in the self same hour of the same night;
Which shows that Heaven has special care of me.
I beg those friends who love me, that they mark
The day a feast upon their calendars.
It was the twenty-seventh of December:
Aye, read the letters if you doubt my oath.

[*The assembly appears confused; several of the guests rise.*

FIRST GUEST.

Oh, horrible! I will depart.—

SECOND GUEST.

And I.—

THIRD GUEST.

No, stay!
I do believe it is some jest; though faith!
'T is mocking us somewhat too solemnly.
I think his son has married the Infanta,
Or found a mine of gold in El Dorado
'T is but to season some such news; stay, stay!
I see 't is only raillery by his smile.

CENCI (*filling a bowl of wine, and lifting it up*).

Oh, thou bright wine, whose purple splendor leaps
And bubbles gaily in this golden bowl
Under the lamp-light, as my spirits do,
To hear the death of my accursed sons!
Could I believe thou wert their mingled blood,
Then would I taste thee like a sacrament,
And pledge with thee the mighty Devil in Hell,
Who, if a father's curses, as men say,
Climb with swift wings after their childrens souls,
And drag them from the very throne of Heaven,
Now triumphs in my triumph!—But thou art
Superfluous; I have drunken deep of joy,
And I will taste no other wine to night.
Here, Andrea! Bear the bowl around.

A GUEST (*rising*).

Thou wretch!
Will none among this noble company
Check the abandon'd villain?

CAMILLO.

For God's sake,
Let me dismiss the guests! You are insane,
Some ill will come of this.

SECOND GUEST.

Seize, silence him!

FIRST GUEST.

I will!

THIRD GUEST.

And I!

CENCI (*addressing those who rise with a threatening gesture*).

Who moves? Who speaks?
[*Turning to the Company.*
'T is nothing,
Enjoy yourselves.—Beware! for my revenge
Is as the seal'd commission of a king,
That kills, and none dare name the murderer.

[*The Banquet is broken up; several of the Guests are departing.*

BEATRICE.

I do entreat you, go not, noble guests;
What although tyranny, and impious hate
Stand shelter'd by a father's hoary hair?
What if 't is he who clothed us in these limbs
Who tortures them, and triumphs? What, if we,
The desolate and the dead, were his own flesh,
His children and his wife, whom he is bound
To love and shelter? Shall we therefore find
No refuge in this merciless wide world?
Oh, think what deep wrongs must have blotted out
First love, then reverence in a child's prone mind
Till it thus vanquish shame and fear! Oh, think
I have borne much, and kiss'd the sacred hand
Which crush'd us to the earth, and thought its stroke
Was perhaps some paternal chastisement!
Have excused much, doubted; and when no doubt
Remain'd, have sought by patience, love and tears
To soften him; and when this could not be

I have knelt down through the long sleepless nights
And lifted up to God, the father of all,
Passionate prayers: and when these were not heard
I have still borne,—until I meet you here,
Princes and kinsmen, at this hideous feast
Given at my brothers' deaths. Two yet remain,
His wife remains and I, whom if ye save not,
Ye may soon share such merriment again
As fathers make over their children's graves.
Oh! Prince Colonna, thou art our near kinsman,
Cardinal, thou art the Pope's chamberlain,
Camillo, thou art chief justiciary,
Take us away!

CENCI. [*He has been conversing with* CAMILLO *during the first part of* BEATRICE'S *speech; he hears the conclusion, and now advances.*
I hope my good friends here
Will think of their own daughters—or perhaps
Of their own throats—before they lend an ear
To this wild girl.

BEATRICE (*not noticing the words of* CENCI).
Dare not one look on me?
None answer? Can one tyrant overbear
The sense of many best and wisest men?
Or is it that I sue not in some form
Of scrupulous law, that ye deny my suit?
Oh, God! that I were buried with my brothers!
And that the flowers of this departed spring
Were fading on my grave! And that my father
Were celebrating now one feast for all!

CAMILLO.
A bitter wish for one so young and gentle;
Can we do nothing?—

COLONNA.
Nothing that I see.
Count Cenci were a dangerous enemy:
Yet I would second any one.

A CARDINAL.
And I.

CENCI.
Retire to your chamber, insolent girl!

BEATRICE.
Retire, thou impious man! Aye, hide thyself
Where never eye can look upon thee more!
Wouldst thou have honour and obedience
Who art a torturer? Father, never dream
Though thou mayst overbear this company,
But ill must come of ill.—Frown not on me!
Haste, hide thyself, lest with avenging looks
My brothers' ghosts should hunt thee from thy seat!
Cover thy face from every living eye,
And start if thou but hear a human step:
Seek out some dark and silent corner, there,
Bow thy white head before offended God,
And we will kneel around, and fervently
Pray that he pity both ourselves and thee.

CENCI.
My friends, I do lament this insane girl
Has spoilt the mirth of our festivity.
Good night, farewell; I will not make you longer
Spectators of our dull domestic quarrels,
Another time.—

[*Exeunt all but* CENCI *and* BEATRICE.
My brain is swimming round;
Give me a bowl of wine!
(*To* BEATRICE.) Thou painted viper!
Beast that thou art! Fair and yet terrible!
I know a charm shall make thee meek and tame.
Now get thee from my sight! [*Exit* BEATRICE.
Here, Andrea,
Fill up this goblet with Greek wine. I said
I would not drink this evening, but I must;
For, strange to say, I feel my spirits fail
With thinking what I have decreed to do.
[*Drinking the wine.*
Be thou the resolution of quick youth
Within my veins, and manhood's purpose stern,
And age's firm, cold, subtle villany;
As if thou wert indeed my children's blood
Which I did thirst to drink. The charm works well;
It must be done, it shall be done, I swear!
[*Exit.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.

An Apartment in the Cenci Palace.

Enter LUCRETIA *and* BERNARDO.

LUCRETIA.
Weep not, my gentle boy; he struck but me,
Who have borne deeper wrongs. In truth, if he
Had kill'd me, he had done a kinder deed.
Oh, God Almighty, do thou look upon us,
We have no other friend but only thee!
Yet weep not; though I love you as my own,
I am not your true mother.

BERNARDO.
Oh, more, more,
Than ever mother was to any child
That have you been to me! Had he not been
My father, do you think that I should weep?

LUCRETIA.
Alas! poor boy, what else couldst thou have done!

Enter BEATRICE.

BEATRICE (*in a hurried voice*).
Did he pass this way? Have you seen him, brother?
Ah! no, that is his step upon the stairs;
'T is nearer now; his hand is on the door;
Mother, if I to thee have ever been
A duteous child, now save me! Thou, great God,
Whose image upon earth a father is,
Dost thou indeed abandon me! He comes;
The door is opening now; I see his face;
He frowns on others, but he smiles on me,
Even as he did after the feast last night.
Enter a SERVANT.
Almighty God, how merciful thou art!
'T is but Orsino's servant.—Well, what news?

SERVANT.
My master bids me say, the Holy father
Has sent back your petition thus unopen'd.
[*Giving a Paper.*
And he demands at what hour 't were secure
To visit you again?

LUCRETIA.
At the Ave Mary. [*Exit* SERVANT.
So, daughter, our last hope has fail'd! Ah me!
How pale you look; you tremble and you stand
Wrapp'd in some fix'd and fearful meditation,

As if one thought were over strong for you:
Your eyes have a chill glare; oh, dearest child!
Are you gone mad? If not, pray speak to me.

BEATRICE.

You see I am not mad; I speak to you.

LUCRETIA.

You talk'd of something that your father did
After that dreadful feast? Could it be worse
Than when he smiled, and cried, My sons are dead!
And every one look'd in his neighbour's face
To see if others were as white as he?
At the first word he spoke I felt the blood
Rush to my heart, and fell into a trance;
And when it past I sat all weak and wild;
Whilst you alone stood up, and with strong words
Check'd his unnatural pride; and I could see
The devil was rebuked that lives in him.
Until this hour thus you have ever stood
Between us and your father's moody wrath
Like a protecting presence: your firm mind
Has been our only refuge and defence:
What can have thus subdued it? What can now
Have given you that cold melancholy look,
Suceeeding to your unaccustom'd fear?

BEATRICE.

What is it that you say? I was just thinking
'T were better not to struggle any more.
Men, like my father, have been dark and bloody,
Yet never—O! before worse comes of it,
'T were wise to die: it ends in that at last.

LUCRETIA.

Oh, talk not so, dear child! Tell me at once
What did your father do or say to you?
He stay'd not after that accursed feast
One moment in your chamber.—Speak to me.

BERNARDO.

Oh, sister, sister, prithee, speak to us!

BEATRICE [*speaking very slowly with a forced calmness.*

It was one word, Mother, one little word;
One look, one smile. [*Wildly.*
Oh! he has trampled me
Under his feet, and made the blood stream down
My pallid cheeks. And he has given us all
Ditch-water, and the fever-stricken flesh
Of buffaloes, and bade us eat or starve,
And we have eaten.—He has made me look
On my beloved Bernardo, when the rust
Of heavy chains has gangrened his sweet limbs,
And I have never yet despair'd—but now!
What would I say? [*Recovering herself.*
Ah! no, 't is nothing new.
The sufferings we all share have made me wild:
He only struck and cursed me as he pass'd;
He said, he look'd, he did,—nothing at all
Beyond his wont, yet it disorder'd me.
Alas! I am forgetful of my duty,
I should preserve my senses for your sake.

LUCRETIA.

Nay, Beatrice; have courage, my sweet girl.
If any one despairs it should be I,
Who loved him once, and now must live with him
Till God in pity call for him or me;
For you may, like your sister, find some husband,
And smile, years hence, with children round your knees;
Whilst I, then dead, and all this hideous coil,
Shall be remember'd only as a dream.

BEATRICE.

Talk not to me, dear lady, of a husband:
Did you not nurse me when my mother died?
Did you not shield me and that dearest boy?
And had we any other friend but you
In infancy, with gentle words and looks
To win our father not to murder us?
And shall I now desert you? May the ghost
Of my dead Mother plead against my soul
If I abandon her who fill'd the place
She left, with more, even, than a mother's love!

BERNARDO.

And I am of my sister's mind. Indeed
I would not leave you in this wretchedness,
Even though the Pope should make me free to live
In some blithe place, like others of my age,
With sports, and delicate food, and the fresh air.
Oh, never think that I will leave you, Mother!

LUCRETIA.

My dear, dear children!

Enter CENCI, *suddenly.*

CENCI.

What, Beatrice here!
Come hither! [*She shrinks back, and covers her face.*
Nay, hide not your face, 't is fair;
Look up! Why, yesternight you dared to look
With disobedient insolence upon me,
Bending a stern and an inquiring brow
On what I meant; whilst I then sought to hide
That which I came to tell you—but in vain.

BEATRICE (*wildly, staggering towards the door*).

Oh, that the earth would gape! Hide me, oh God!

CENCI.

Then it was I whose inarticulate words
Fell from my lips, who with tottering steps
Fled from your presence, as you now from mine.
Stay, I command you—from this day and hour
Never again, I think, with fearless eye,
And brow superior, and unalter'd cheek,
And that lip made for tenderness or scorn,
Shalt thou strike dumb the meanest of mankind;
Me least of all. Now get thee to thy chamber,
Thou too, loathed image of thy cursed mother,
[*To* BERNARDO.
Thy milky, meek face makes me sick with hate!
[*Exeunt* BEATRICE *and* BERNARDO.
(*Aside.*) So much has past between us as must make
Me bold, her fearful.—'T is an awful thing
To touch such mischief as I now conceive:
So men sit shivering on the dewy bank,
And try the chill stream with their feet; once in—
How the delighted spirit pants for joy!

LUCRETIA (*advancing timidly towards him*).

Oh, husband! Pray forgive poor Beatrice,
She meant not any ill.

CENCI.

Nor you perhaps?
Nor that young imp, whom you have taught by rote
Parricide with his alphabet? Nor Giacomo?
Nor those two most unnatural sons, who stirr'd
Enmity up against me with the Pope?
Whom in one night merciful God cut off:
Innocent lambs! They thought not any ill.

You were not here conspiring? You said nothing
Of how I might be dungeon'd as a madman;
Or be condemn'd to death for some offence,
And you would be the witnesses?—This failing,
How just it were to hire assassins, or
Put sudden poison in my evening drink?
Or smother me when overcome by wine?
Seeing we had no other judge but God,
And he had sentenced me, and there were none
But you to be the executioners
Of his decree enregister'd in heaven?
Oh, no! You said not this?

LUCRETIA.

So help me God,
I never thought the things you charge me with!

CENCI.

If you dare speak that wicked lie again,
I 'll kill you. What! it was not by your counsel
That Beatrice disturb'd the feast last night?
You did not hope to stir some enemies
Against me, and escape, and laugh to scorn
What every nerve of you now trembles at?
You judged that men were bolder than they are;
Few dare to stand between their grave and me.

LUCRETIA.

Look not so dreadfully! By my salvation
I knew not aught that Beatrice design'd;
Nor do I think she design'd any thing
Until she heard you talk of her dead brothers.

CENCI.

Blaspheming liar! You are damn'd for this!
But I will take you where you may persuade
The stones you tread on to deliver you:
For men shall there be none but those who dare
All things—not question that which I command.
On Wednesday next I shall set out: you know
That savage rock, the Castle of Petrella,
'T is safely wall'd, and moated round about:
Its dungeons under ground, and its thick towers
Never told tales; though they have heard and seen
What might make dumb things speak.—Why do you linger?
Make speediest preparation for the journey!

[*Exit* LUCRETIA.

The all beholding sun yet shines; I hear
A busy stir of men about the streets;
I see the bright sky through the window panes:
It is a garish, broad, and peering day;
Loud, light, suspicious, full of eyes and ears,
And every little corner, nook and hole
Is penetrated with the insolent light.
Come darkness! Yet, what is the day to me?
And wherefore should I wish for night, who do
A deed which shall confound both night and day?
'T is she shall grope through a bewildering mist
Of horror: if there be a sun in heaven,
She shall not dare to look upon its beams;
Nor feel its warmth. Let her then wish for night;
The act I think shall soon extinguish all
For me: I bear a darker deadlier gloom
Than the earth's shade, or interlunar air,
Or constellations quench'd in murkiest cloud,
In which I walk secure and unbeheld
Towards my purpose.—Would that it were done!

[*Exit.*

SCENE II.

A Chamber in the Vatican.

Enter CAMILLO *and* GIACOMO, *in conversation.*

CAMILLO.

There is an obsolete and doubtful law,
By which you might obtain a bare provision
Of food and clothing.

GIACOMO.

Nothing more? Alas!
Bare must be the provision which strict law
Awards, and aged sullen avarice pays.
Why did my father not apprentice me
To some mechanic trade? I should have then
Been trained in no high-born necessities
Which I could meet not by my daily toil.
The eldest son of a rich nobleman
Is heir to all his incapacities;
He has wide wants, and narrow powers. If you,
Cardinal Camillo, were reduced at once
From thrice-driven beds of down, and delicate food,
An hundred servants, and six palaces,
To that which nature doth indeed require?

CAMILLO.

Nay, there is reason in your plea; 't were hard.

GIACOMO.

'T is hard for a firm man to bear: but I
Have a dear wife, a lady of high birth,
Whose dowry in ill hour I lent my father,
Without a bond or witness to the deed:
And children, who inherit her fine senses,
The fairest creatures in this breathing world;
And she and they reproach me not. Cardinal,
Do you not think the Pope would interpose
And stretch authority beyond the law?

CAMILLO.

Though your peculiar case is hard, I know
The Pope will not divert the course of law.
After that impious feast the other night
I spoke with him, and urged him then to check
Your father's cruel hand; he frown'd and said,
"Children are disobedient, and they sting
Their father's hearts to madness and despair,
Requiting years of care with contumely.
I pity the Count Cenci from my heart;
His outraged love perhaps awaken'd hate,
And thus he is exasperated to ill.
In the great war between the old and young,
I, who have white hairs and a tottering body,
Will keep at least blameless neutrality."

Enter ORSINO.

You, my good lord Orsino, heard those words.

ORSINO.

What words?

GIACOMO.

Alas, repeat them not again!
There then is no redress for me, at least
None but that which I may achieve myself,
Since I am driven to the brink.—But, say,
My innocent sister and my only brother
Are dying underneath my father's eye,
The memorable torturers of this land,
Galeaz Visconti, Borgia, Ezzelin,

Never inflicted on their meanest slave
What these endure : shall they have no protection?

CAMILLO.

Why, if they would petition to the Pope
I see not how he could refuse it—yet
He holds it of most dangerous example
In aught to weaken the paternal power,
Being, as 't were, the shadow of his own.
I pray you now excuse me. I have business
That will not bear delay. [*Exit* CAMILLO.

GIACOMO.

But you, Orsino,
Have the petition; wherefore not present it?

ORSINO.

I have presented it, and backed it with
My earnest prayers, and urgent interest;
It was return'd unanswer'd. I doubt not
But that the strange and execrable deeds
Alleged in it—in truth they might well baffle
Any belief—have turn'd the Pope's displeasure
Upon the accusers from the criminal:
So I should guess from what Camillo said.

GIACOMO.

My friend, that palace-walking devil Gold
Has whispered silence to his Holiness:
And we are left, as scorpions ringed with fire.
What should we do but strike ourselves to death?
For he who is our murderous persecutor
Is shielded by a father's holy name,
Or I would— [*Stops abruptly.*

ORSINO.

What? Fear not to speak your thought.
Words are but holy as the deeds they cover:
A priest who has forsworn the God he serves;
A judge who makes the truth weep at his decree;
A friend who should weave counsel, as I now,
But as the mantle of some selfish guile;
A father who is all a tyrant seems,
Were the profaner for his sacred name.

GIACOMO.

Ask me not what I think; the unwilling brain
Feigns often what it would not; and we trust
Imagination with such phantasies
As the tongue dares not fashion into words,
Which have no words, their horror makes them dim
To the mind's eye—My heart denies itself
To think what you demand.

ORSINO.

But a friend's bosom
Is as the inmost cave of our own mind
Where we sit shut from the wide gaze of day,
And from the all-communicating air.
You look what I suspected.—

GIACOMO.

Spare me now!
I am as one lost in a midnight wood,
Who dares not ask some harmless passenger
The path across the wilderness, lest he,
As my thoughts are, should be—a murderer.
I know you are my friend, and all I dare
Speak to my soul that will I trust with thee.
But now my heart is heavy and would take
Lone counsel from a night of sleepless care.
Pardon me, that I say farewell—farewell!
I would that to my own suspected self
I could address a word so full of peace.

ORSINO.

Farewell!—Be your thoughts better or more bold.
[*Exit* GIACOMO.
I had disposed the Cardinal Camillo
To feed his hope with cold encouragement:
It fortunately serves my close designs
That 't is a trick of this same family
To analyse their own and other minds.
Such self-anatomy shall teach the will
Dangerous secrets: for it tempts our powers,
Knowing what must be thought, and may be done,
Into the depth of darkest purposes:
So Cenci fell into the pit; even I,
Since Beatrice unveil'd me to myself,
And made me shrink from what I cannot shun,
Show a poor figure to my own esteem,
To which I grow half reconciled. I 'll do
As little mischief as I can; that thought
Shall fee the accuser conscience. [*After a pause.*
Now what harm
If Cenci should be murdered?—Yet, if murdered,
Wherefore by me? And what if I could take
The profit, yet omit the sin and peril
In such an action? Of all earthly things
I fear a man whose blows outspeed his words;
And such is Cenci: and while Cenci lives
His daughter's dowry were a secret grave
If a priest wins her.—Oh, fair Beatrice!
Would that I loved thee not, or loving thee
Could but despise danger and gold and all,
That frowns between my wish and its effect,
Or smiles beyond it! There is no escape—
Her bright form kneels beside me at the altar,
And follows me to the resort of men,
And fills my slumber with tumultuous dreams,
So when I wake my blood seems liquid fire;
And if I strike my damp and dizzy head
My hot palm scorches it: her very name,
But spoken by a stranger, makes my heart
Sicken and pant; and thus unprofitably
I clasp the phantom of unfelt delights,
Till weak imagination half possesses
The self-created shadow. Yet much longer
Will I not nurse this life of feverous hours:
From the unravell'd hopes of Giacomo
I must work out my own dear purposes.
I see, as from a tower, the end of all:
Her father dead; her brother bound to me
By a dark secret, surer than the grave;
Her mother scared and unexpostulating,
From the dread manner of her wish achieved:
And she!—Once more take courage, my faint heart;
What dares a friendless maiden match'd with thee?
I have such foresight as assures success!
Some unbeheld divinity doth ever,
When dread events are near, stir up men's minds
To black suggestions; and he prospers best,
Not who becomes the instrument of ill,
But who can flatter the dark spirit, that makes
Its empire and its prey of other hearts
Till it become his slave—as I will do. [*Exit.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.

An Apartment in the Cenci Palace.

LUCRETIA; *to her enter* BEATRICE.

BEATRICE (*She enters staggering, and speaks wildly*).
Reach me that handkerchief!—My brain is hurt;
My eyes are full of blood; just wipe them for me—
I see but indistinctly.—

LUCRETIA.
My sweet child,
You have no wound; 't is only a cold dew
That starts from your dear brow—Alas! alas!
What has befallen?

BEATRICE.
How comes this hair undone?
Its wandering strings must be what blind me so,
And yet I tied it fast.—O, horrible!
The pavement sinks under my feet! The walls
Spin round! I see a woman weeping there,
And standing calm and motionless, whilst I
Slide giddily as the world reels—My God!
The beautiful blue heaven is fleck'd with blood!
The sunshine on the floor is black! The air
Is changed to vapours such as the dead breathe
In charnel-pits! Pah! I am choked! There creeps
A clinging, black, contaminating mist
About me—'t is substantial, heavy, thick,
I cannot pluck it from me, for it glues
My fingers and my limbs to one another,
And eats into my sinews, and dissolves
My flesh to a pollution, poisoning
The subtle, pure, and inmost spirit of life!
My God! I never knew what the mad felt
Before; for I am mad beyond all doubt!
[*More wildly.*
No, I am dead! These putrefying limbs
Shut round and sepulchre the panting soul
Which would burst forth into the wandering air!
[*A pause.*
What hideous thought was that I had even now?
'T is gone; and yet its burthen remains here
O'er these dull eyes—upon this weary heart!
O, world! O, life! O, day! O, misery!

LUCRETIA.
What ails thee, my poor child? She answers not:
Her spirit apprehends the sense of pain,
But not its cause; suffering has dried away
The source from which it sprung.—

BEATRICE (*franticly*).
Like Parricide—
Misery has kill'd its father: yet its father
Never like mine—O, God! What thing am I?

LUCRETIA.
My dearest child, what has your father done?

BEATRICE (*doubtfully*).
Who art thou, questioner? I have no father.
[*Aside.*
She is the madhouse nurse who tends on me:
It is a piteous office.
[*To* LUCRETIA, *in a slow, subdued voice.*
Do you know,
I thought I was that wretched Beatrice
Men speak of, whom her father sometimes hales
From hall to hall by the entangled hair;
At others, pens up naked in damp cells
Where scaly reptiles crawl, and starves her there,
Till she will eat strange flesh. This woful story
So did I overact in my sick dreams,
That I imagined—no, it cannot be!
Horrible things have been in this wild world,
Prodigious mixtures, and confusions strange
Of good and ill; and worse have been conceived
Than ever there was found a heart to do.
But never fancy imaged such a deed
As— [*Pauses, suddenly recollecting herself.*
Who art thou? Swear to me, ere I die
With fearful expectation, that indeed
Thou art not what thou seemest—Mother!

LUCRETIA.
Oh!
My sweet child, know you—

BEATRICE.
Yet speak it not:
For then if this be truth, that other too
Must be a truth, a firm enduring truth,
Link'd with each lasting circumstance of life,
Never to change, never to pass away.
Why so it is. This is the Cenci Palace;
Thou art Lucretia; I am Beatrice.
I have talk'd some wild words, but will no more.
Mother, come near me: from this point of time,
I am— [*Her voice dies away faintly.*

LUCRETIA.
Alas! What has befallen thee, child?
What has thy father done?

BEATRICE.
What have I done?
Am I not innocent? Is it my crime
That one with white hair, and imperious brow,
Who tortured me from my forgotten years,
As parents only dare, should call himself
My father, yet should be!—Oh, what am I?
What name, what place, what memory shall be mine?
What retrospects, outliving even despair?

LUCRETIA.
He is a violent tyrant, surely, child:
We know that death alone can make us free;
His death or ours. But what can he have done
Of deadlier outrage or worse injury?
Thou art unlike thyself; thine eyes shoot forth
A wandering and strange spirit. Speak to me:
Unlock those pallid hands whose fingers twine
With one another.

BEATRICE.
'T is the restless life
Tortured within them. If I try to speak
I shall go mad. Aye, something must be done;
What, yet I know not—something which shall make
The thing that I have suffer'd but a shadow
In the dread lightning which avenges it;
Brief, rapid, irreversible, destroying
The consequence of what it cannot cure.
Some such thing is to be endured or done:
When I know what, I shall be still and calm,
And never any thing will move me more.
But now!—Oh blood, which art my father's blood,
Circling through these contaminated veins
If thou, poured forth on the polluted earth,
Could wash away the crime, and punishment

By which I suffer—no, that cannot be!
Many might doubt there were a God above
Who sees and permits evil, and so die:
That faith no agony shall obscure in me.

LUCRETIA.

It must indeed have been some bitter wrong;
Yet what, I dare not guess. Oh! my lost child,
Hide not in proud impenetrable grief
Thy sufferings from my fear.

BEATRICE.

I hide them not.
What are the words which you would have me speak?
I, who can feign no image in my mind
Of that which has transform'd me. I, whose thought
Is like a ghost shrouded and folded up
In its own formless horror. Of all words,
That minister to mortal intercourse,
Which wouldst thou hear? For there is none to tell
My misery: if another ever knew
Aught like to it, she died as I will die,
And left it, as I must, without a name.
Death! Death! Our law and our religion call thee
A punishment and a reward—Oh, which
Have I deserved?

LUCRETIA.

The peace of innocence;
Till in your season you be call'd to heaven.
Whate'er you may have suffer'd, you have done
No evil. Death must be the punishment
Of crime, or the reward of trampling down
The thorns which God has strew'd upon the path
Which leads to immortality.

BEATRICE.

Aye, death—
The punishment of crime. I pray thee, God,
Let me not be bewilder'd while I judge.
If I must live day after day, and keep
These limbs, the unworthy temple of thy spirit,
As a foul den from which what thou abhorrest
May mock thee, unavenged—it shall not be!
Self-murder—no that might be no escape,
For thy decree yawns like a Hell between
Our will and it:—Oh! in this mortal world
There is no vindication and no law
Which can adjudge and execute the doom
Of that through which I suffer.

Enter ORSINO.

(*She approaches him solemnly.*) Welcome, Friend!
I have to tell you that, since last we met,
I have endured a wrong so great and strange,
That neither life or death can give me rest.
Ask me not what it is, for there are deeds
Which have no form, sufferings which have no tongue.

ORSINO.

And what is he who has thus injured you?

BEATRICE.

The man they call my father: a dread name.

ORSINO.

It cannot be—

BEATRICE.

What it can be, or not,
Forbear to think. It is, and it has been;
Advise me how it shall not be again.
I thought to die; but a religious awe
Restrains me, and the dread lest death itself
Might be no refuge from the consciousness
Of what is yet unexpiated. Oh, speak!

ORSINO.

Accuse him of the deed, and let the law
Avenge thee.

BEATRICE.

Oh, ice-hearted counsellor!
If I could find a word that might make known
The crime of my destroyer; and that done,
My tongue should like a knife tear out the secret
Which cankers my heart's core; aye, lay all bare
So that my unpolluted fame should be
With vilest gossips a stale-mouthed story;
A mock, a bye-word, an astonishment:—
If this were done, which never shall be done,
Think of the offender's gold, his dreaded hate,
And the strange horror of the accuser's tale,
Baffling belief, and overpowering speech;
Scarce whisper'd, unimaginable, wrapt
In hideous hints—Oh, most assured redress!

ORSINO.

You will endure it then?

BEATRICE.

Endure?—Orsino,
It seems your counsel is small profit.
[*Turns from him, and speaks half to herself.*
Aye,
All must be suddenly resolved and done.
What is this undistinguishable mist
Of thoughts, which rise, like shadow after shadow,
Darkening each other?

ORSINO.

Should the offender live?
Triumph in his misdeed? and make, by use,
His crime, whate'er it is, dreadful no doubt,
Thine element; until thou mayest become
Utterly lost; subdued even to the hue
Of that which thou permittest?

BEATRICE (*to herself*).

Mighty death!
Thou double visaged shadow! Only judge!
Rightfullest arbiter!
[*She retires absorbed in thought.*

LUCRETIA.

If the lightning
Of God has e'er descended to avenge—

ORSINO.

Blaspheme not! His high Providence commits
Its glory on this earth, and their own wrongs
Into the hands of men; if they neglect
To punish crime—

LUCRETIA.

But if one, like this wretch,
Should mock with gold, opinion, law, and power?
If there be no appeal to that which makes
The guiltiest tremble! If because our wrongs,
For that they are, unnatural, strange and monstrous,
Exceed all measure of belief? Oh, God!
If, for the very reasons which should make
Redress most swift and sure, our injurer triumphs?
And we the victims, bear worse punishment
Than that appointed for their torturer?

ORSINO.

Think not
But that there is redress where there is wrong,
So we be bold enough to seize it.

LUCRETIA.

How?
If there were any way to make all sure,
I know not—but I think it might be good
To—

ORSINO.

Why, his late outrage to Beatrice;
For it is such, as I but faintly guess,
As makes remorse dishonour, and leaves her
Only one duty, how she may avenge:
You, but one refuge from ills ill endured;
Me, but one counsel—

LUCRETIA.

For we cannot hope
That aid, or retribution, or resource
Will arise thence, where every other one
Might find them with less need.

(BEATRICE *advances.*)

ORSINO.

Then—

BEATRICE.

Peace, Orsino!
And, honoured Lady, while I speak, I pray,
That you put off, as garments overworn,
Forbearance and respect, remorse and fear,
And all the fit restraints of daily life,
Which have been borne from childhood, but which now
Would be a mockery to my holier plea.
As I have said, I have endured a wrong,
Which, though it be expressionless, is such
As asks atonement; both for what is past,
And lest I be reserved, day after day,
To load with crimes an overburthen'd soul,
And be—what ye can dream not. I have pray'd
To God, and I have talk'd with my own heart,
And have unravell'd my entangled will,
And have at length determined what is right.
Art thou my friend, Orsino? False or true?
Pledge thy salvation ere I speak.

ORSINO.

I swear
To dedicate my cunning, and my strength,
My silence, and whatever else is mine,
To thy commands.

LUCRETIA.

You think we should devise
His death?

BEATRICE.

And excute what is devised,
And suddenly. We must be brief and bold.

ORSINO.

And yet most cautious.

LUCRETIA.

For the jealous laws
Would punish us with death and infamy
For that which it became themselves to do.

BEATRICE.

Be cautious as ye may, but prompt. Orsino,
What are the means?

ORSINO.

I know two dull, fierce outlaws,
Who think man's spirit as a worm's, and they
Would trample out, for any slight caprice,
The meanest or the noblest life. This mood
Is marketable here in Rome. They sell
What we now want.

LUCRETIA.

To-morrow before dawn,
Cenci will take us to that lonely rock,
Petrella, in the Apulian Appenines.
If he arrive there—

BEATRICE.

He must not arrive.

ORSINO.

Will it be dark before you reach the tower?

LUCRETIA.

The sun will scarce be set.

BEATRICE.

But I remember
Two miles on this side of the fort, the road
Crosses a deep ravine; 't is rough and narrow,
And winds with short turns down the precipice;
And in its depth there is a mighty rock,
Which has, from unimaginable years,
Sustain'd itself with terror and with toil
Over a gulf, and with the agony
With which it clings seems slowly coming down;
Even as a wretched soul hour after hour,
Clings to the mass of life; yet clinging, leans;
And leaning, makes more dark the dread abyss
In which it fears to fall: beneath this crag
Huge as despair, as if in weariness,
The melancholy mountain yawns—below,
You hear but see not an impetuous torrent
Raging among the caverns, and a bridge
Crosses the chasm; and high above there grow,
With intersecting trunks, from crag to crag,
Cedars, and yews, and pines; whose tangled hair
Is matted in one solid roof of shade
By the dark ivy's twine. At noon-day here
'T is twilight and at sunset blackest night.

ORSINO.

Before you reach that bridge make some excuse
For spurring on your mules, or loitering
Until—

BEATRICE.

What sound is that?

LUCRETIA.

Hark! No, it cannot be a servant's step;
It must be Cenci, unexpectedly
Returned—Make some excuse for being here.

BEATRICE (*to* ORSINO, *as she goes out*).

That step we hear approach must never pass
The bridge of which we spoke.

[*Exeunt* LUCRETIA *and* BEATRICE.

ORSINO.

What shall I do?
Cenci must find me here, and I must bear
The imperious inquisition of his looks
As to what brought me hither: let me mask
Mine own in some inane and vacant smile.

Enter GIACOMO, *in a hurried manner.*

How! Have you ventured thither? know you then
That Cenci is from home?

GIACOMO.

I sought him here;
And now must wait till he returns.

ORSINO.

Great God!
Weigh you the danger of this rashness?

GIACOMO.

Aye!
Does my destroyer know his danger? We
Are now no more, as once, parent and child,
But man to man; the oppressor to the oppress'd;
The slanderer to the slander'd; foe to foe:
He has cast Nature off, which was his shield,
And Nature casts him off, who is her shame;
And I spurn both. Is it a father's throat
Which I will shake, and say, I ask not gold;
I ask not happy years; nor memories
Of tranquil childhood; nor home-shelter'd love;
Though all these hast thou torn from me, and more;
But only my fair fame; only one hoard
Of peace, which I thought hidden from thy hate,
Under the penury heap'd on me by thee,
Or I will—God can understand and pardon:
Why should I speak with man?

ORSINO.

Be calm, dear friend.

GIACOMO.

Well, I will calmly tell you what he did.
This old Francesco Cenci, as you know,
Borrow'd the dowry of my wife from me,
And then denied the loan; and left me so
In poverty, the which I sought to mend
By holding a poor office in the state.
It had been promised to me, and already
I bought new clothing for my ragged babes,
And my wife smiled; and my heart knew repose.
When Cenci's intercession, as I found,
Conferr'd this office on a wretch, whom thus
He paid for vilest service. I return'd
With this ill news, and we sate sad together
Solacing our despondency with tears
Of such affection and unbroken faith
As temper life's worst bitterness; when he,
As he is wont, came to upbraid and curse,
Mocking our poverty, and telling us
Such was God's scourge for disobedient sons.
And then, that I might strike him dumb with shame,
I spoke of my wife's dowry; but he coin'd
A brief yet specious tale, how I had wasted
The sum in secret riot; and he saw
My wife was touch'd, and he went smiling forth.
And when I knew the impression he had made,
And felt my wife insult with silent scorn
My ardent truth, and look averse and cold,
I went forth too: but soon return'd again;
Yet not so soon but that my wife had taught
My children her harsh thoughts, and they all cried,
« Give us clothes, father! Give us better food!
What you in one night squander were enough
For months!» I look'd, and saw that home was hell.
And to that hell will I return no more
Until mine enemy has render'd up
Atonement, or, as he gave life to me
I will, reversing nature's law—

ORSINO.

Trust me,
The compensation which thou seekest here
Will be denied.

GIACOMO.

Then—Are you not my friend?
Did you not hint at the alternative,
Upon the brink of which you see I stand,
The other day when we conversed together?
My wrongs were then less. That word parricide,
Although I am resolved, haunts me like fear.

ORSINO.

It must be fear itself, for the bare word
Is hollow mockery. Mark, how wisest God
Draws to one point the threads of a just doom,
So sanctifying it: what you devise
Is, as it were, accomplish'd.

GIACOMO.

Is he dead?

ORSINO.

His grave is ready. Know that since we met
Cenci has done an outrage to his daughter.

GIACOMO.

What outrage?

ORSINO.

That she speaks not, but you may
Conceive such half conjectures as I do,
From her fixed paleness, and the lofty grief
Of her stern brow bent on the idle air,
And her severe unmodulated voice,
Drowning both tenderness and dread; and last
From this; that whilst her step-mother and I,
Bewilder'd in our horror, talked together
With obscure hints; both self-misunderstood
And darkly guessing, stumbling, in our talk,
Over the truth, and yet to its revenge,
She interrupted us, and with a look
Which told before she spoke it, he must die.

GIACOMO.

It is enough. My doubts are well appeased;
There is a higher reason for the act
Than mine; there is a holier judge than me,
A more unblamed avenger. Beatrice,
Who in the gentleness of thy sweet youth
Hast never trodden on a worm, or bruised
A living flower, but thou hast pitied it
With needless tears! Fair sister, thou in whom
Men wonder'd how such loveliness and wisdom
Did not destroy each other! Is there made
Ravage of thee? O heart, I ask no more
Justification! Shall I wait, Orsino,
Till he return, and stab him at the door?

ORSINO.

Not so; some accident might interpose
To rescue him from what is now most sure;
And you are unprovided where to fly,
How to excuse or to conceal. Nay, listen:
All is contrived; success is so assured
That—

Enter BEATRICE.

BEATRICE.

'T is my brother's voice! You know me not?

GIACOMO.

My sister, my lost sister!

BEATRICE.

Lost indeed!
I see Orsino has talk'd with you, and
That you conjecture things too horrible
To speak, yet far less than the truth. Now, stay not,
He might return: yet kiss me; I shall know
That then thou hast consented to his death.
Farewell, Farewell! Let piety to God,

Brotherly love, justice and clemency,
And all things that make tender hardest hearts,
Make thine hard, brother. Answer not—farewell.
[*Exeunt severally.*

SCENE II.

A mean apartment in GIACOMO's *house.*

GIACOMO, *alone.*

GIACOMO.

'T is midnight, and Orsino comes not yet.
[*Thunder, and the sound of a storm.*
What! can the everlasting elements
Feel with a worm like man? If so, the shaft
Of mercy-winged lightning would not fall
On stones and trees. My wife and children sleep:
They are now living in unmeaning dreams:
But I must wake, still doubting if that deed
Be just which was most necessary. O,
Thou unreplenished lamp! whose narrow fire
Is shaken by the wind, and on whose edge
Devouring darkness hovers! Thou small flame,
Which, as a dying pulse rises and falls,
Still flickerest up and down, how very soon,
Did I not feed thee, wouldst thou fail and be
As thou hadst never been! So wastes and sinks
Even now, perhaps, the life that kindled mine:
But that no power can fill with vital oil
That broken lamp of flesh. Ha! 't is the blood
Which fed these veins that ebbs till all is cold:
It is the form that moulded mine that sinks
Into the white and yellow spasms of death:
It is the soul by which mine was array'd
In God's immortal likeness which now stands
Naked before Heaven's judgment-seat!
[*A bell strikes.*
One! Two!
The hours crawl on; and when my hairs are white
My son will then perhaps be waiting thus,
Tortured between just hate and vain remorse;
Chiding the tardy messenger of news
Like those which I expect. I almost wish
He be not dead, although my wrongs are great;
Yet—'t is Orsino's step—

Enter ORSINO.

Speak!

ORSINO.

I am come
To say he has escaped.

GIACOMO.

Escaped!

ORSINO.

And safe
Within Petrella. He pass'd by the spot
Appointed for the deed an hour too soon.

GIACOMO.

Are we the fools of such contingencies?
And do we waste in blind misgivings thus
The hours when we should act? Then wind and thunder,
Which seemed to howl his knell, is the loud laughter
With which Heaven mocks our weakness! I henceforth
Will ne'er repent of aught design'd or done
But my repentance.

ORSINO.

See, the lamp is out.

GIACOMO.

If no remorse is ours when the dim air
Has drank this innocent flame, why should we quail
When Cenci's life, that light by which ill spirits
See the worst deeds they prompt, shall sink for ever?
No, I am hardened.

ORSINO.

Why, what need of this?
Who fear'd the pale intrusion of remorse
In a just deed? Although our first plan failed,
Doubt not but he will soon be laid to rest.
But light the lamp; let us not talk i' the dark.

GIACOMO (*lighting the lamp*).

And yet once quench'd I cannot thus relume
My father's life: do you not think his ghost
Might plead that argument with God?

ORSINO.

Once gone,
You cannot now recall your sister's peace;
Your own extinguish'd years of youth and hope;
Nor your wife's bitter words; nor all the taunts
Which, from the prosperous, weak misfortune takes;
Nor your dead mother; nor—

GIACOMO.

O, speak no more!
I am resolved, although this very hand
Must quench the life that animated it.

ORSINO.

There is no need of that. Listen: you know
Olimpio, the castellan of Petrella
In old Colonna's time; him whom your father
Degraded from his post? And Marzio,
That desperate wretch, whom he deprived last year
Of a reward of blood, well earned and due?

GIACOMO.

I knew Olimpio; and they say he hated
Old Cenci so, that in his silent rage
His lips grew white only to see him pass.
Of Marzio I know nothing.

ORSINO.

Marzio's hate
Matches Olimpio's. I have sent these men,
But in your name, and as at your request,
To talk with Beatrice and Lucretia.

GIACOMO.

Only to talk?

ORSINO.

The moments, which even now
Pass onward to morrow's midnight hour,
May memorize their flight with death: ere then
They must have talk'd, and may perhaps have done,
And made an end.

GIACOMO.

Listen! What sound is that?

ORSINO.

The house-dog moans, and the beams crack: nought else.

GIACOMO.

It is my wife complaining in her sleep:
I doubt not she is saying bitter things
Of me; and all my children round her dreaming
That I deny them sustenance.

ORSINO.

Whilst he
Who truly took it from them, and who fills

Their hungry rest with bitterness, now sleeps
Lapp'd in bad pleasures, and triumphantly
Mocks thee in visions of successful hate
Too like the truth of day.

GIACOMO.

If e'er he wakes
Again, I will not trust to hireling hands.

ORSINO.

Why, that were well. I must be gone; good night!
When next we meet—

GIACOMO.

May all be done—and all
Forgotten.—Oh, that I had never been!

[*Exeunt.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

An Apartment in the Castle of Petrella.

Enter CENCI.

CENCI.

She comes not; yet I left her even now
Vanquish'd and faint. She knows the penalty
Of her delay: yet what if threats are vain?
Am I now not within Petrella's moat?
Or fear I still the eyes and ears of Rome?
Might I not drag her by the golden hair?
Stamp on her? Keep her sleepless till her brain
Be overworn? Tame her with chains and famine?
Less would suffice. Yet so to leave undone
What I most seek! No, 't is her stubborn will,
Which by its own consent shall stoop as low
As that which drags it down.

Enter LUCRETIA.

Thou loathed wretch!
Hide thee from my abhorrence; Fly, begone!
Yet stay! Bid Beatrice come hither.

LUCRETIA.

Oh,
Husband! I pray, for thine own wretched sake,
Heed what thou dost. A man who walks like thee
Through crimes, and through the danger of his crimes,
Each hour may stumble o'er a sudden grave.
And thou art old; thy hairs are hoary grey;
As thou wouldst save thyself from death and hell,
Pity thy daughter; give her to some friend
In marriage: so that she may tempt thee not
To hatred, or worse thoughts, if worse there be.

CENCI.

What! like her sister, who has found a home
To mock my hate from with prosperity?
Strange ruin shall destroy both her and thee,
And all that yet remain. My death may be
Rapid, her destiny outspeeds it. Go,
Bid her come hither, and before my mood
Be changed, lest I should drag her by the hair.

LUCRETIA.

She sent me to thee, husband. At thy presence
She fell, as thou dost know, into a trance;
And in that trance she heard a voice which said,
"Cenci must die! Let him confess himself!
Even now the accusing Angel waits to hear
If God, to punish his enormous crimes,
Harden his dying heart!"

CENCI.

Why—such things are—
No doubt divine revealings may be made.
'T is plain I have been favoured from above,
For when I cursed my sons they died.—Aye—so—
As to the right or wrong, that's talk. Repentance—
Repentance is an easy moment's work,
And more depends on God than me. Well—well—
I must give up the greater point, which was
To poison and corrupt her soul.

[*A pause;* LUCRETIA *approaches anxiously, and then shrinks back as he speaks.*

One, two;
Aye—Rocco and Cristofano my curse
Strangled: and Giacomo, I think, will find
Life a worse Hell than that beyond the grave:
Beatrice shall, if there be skill in hate,
Die in despair, blaspheming: to Bernardo,
He is so innocent, I will bequeath
The memory of these deeds, and make his youth
The sepulchre of hope, where evil thoughts
Shall grow like weeds on a neglected tomb.
When all is done, out in the wide Campagna,
I will pile up my silver and my gold;
My costly robes, paintings, and tapestries;
My parchments and all records of my wealth,
And make a bonfire in my joy, and leave
Of my possessions nothing but my nam
Which shall be an inheritance to strip
Its wearer bare as infamy. That done,
My soul, which is a scourge, will I resign
Into the hands of him who wielded it;
Be it for its own punishment or theirs,
He will not ask it of me till the lash
Be broken in its last and deepest wound;
Until its hate be all inflicted. Yet,
Lest death outspeed my purpose, let me make
Short work and sure. [*Going.*

LUCRETIA (*stops him*).

Oh, stay! It was a feint:
She had no vision, and she heard no voice.
I said it but to awe thee.

CENCI.

That is well.
Vile palterer with the sacred truth of God,
Be thy soul choked with that blaspheming lie!
For Beatrice worse terrors are in store
To bend her to my will.

LUCRETIA.

Oh! to what will?
What cruel sufferings more than she has known
Canst thou inflict?

CENCI.

Andrea! go, call my daughter;
And if she comes not, tell her that I come.
What sufferings? I will drag her, step by step,
Through infamies unheard of among men;
She shall stand shelterless in the broad noon
Of public scorn, for acts blazon'd abroad,
One among which shall be—What? Canst thou guess?
She shall become (for what she most abhors
Shall have a fascination to entrap
Her loathing will), to her own conscious self
All she appears to others; and when dead,

As she shall die unshrived and unforgiven,
A rebel to her father and her God,
Her corpse shall be abandoned to the hounds;
Her name shall be the terror of the earth;
Her spirit shall approach the throne of God
Plague-spotted with my curses. I will make
Body and soul a monstrous lump of ruin.

Enter ANDREA.

ANDREA.

The lady Beatrice—

CENCI.

Speak, pale slave! What
Said she?

ANDREA.

My Lord, 't was what she looked; she said:
Go tell my father that I see the gulf
Of Hell between us two, which he may pass,
I will not. [*Exit* ANDREA.

CENCI.

Go thou quick, Lucretia,
Tell her to come; yet let her understand
Her coming is consent: and say, moreover,
That if she come not I will curse her.

[*Exit* LUCRETIA.

Ha!
With what but with a father's curse doth God
Panic-strike armed victory, and make pale
Cities in their prosperity? The world's Father
Must grant a parent's prayer against his child
Be he who asks even what men call me.
Will not the deaths of her rebellious brothers
Awe her before I speak? For I on them
Did imprecate quick ruin, and it came.

Enter LUCRETIA.

Well; what? Speak, wretch!

LUCRETIA.

She said, I cannot come;
Go tell my father that I see a torrent
Of his own blood raging between us.

CENCI (*kneeling*).

God!
Hear me! If this most specious mass of flesh,
Which thou hast made my daughter; this my blood,
This particle of my divided being;
Or rather, this my bane and my disease,
Whose sight infects and poisons me; this devil
Which sprung from me as from a hell, was meant
To aught good use; if her bright loveliness
Was kindled to illumine this dark world;
If, nursed by thy selectest dew of love,
Such virtues blossom in her as should make
The peace of life, I pray thee for my sake,
As thou the common God and Father art
Of her, and me, and all; reverse that doom!
Earth, in the name of God, let her food be
Poison, until she be encrusted round
With leprous stains! Heaven, rain upon her head
The blistering drops of the Maremma's dew,
Till she be speckled like a toad; parch up
Those love-enkindled lips, warp those fine limbs
To loathed lameness! All-beholding sun,
Strike in thine envy those life-darting eyes
With thine own blinding beams!

LUCRETIA.

Peace! peace!
For thine own sake unsay those dreadful words.
When high God grants he punishes such prayers.

CENCI (*leaping up, and throwing his right hand towards Heaven*).

He does his will, I mine! This in addition,
That if she have a child—

LUCRETIA.

Horrible thought!

CENCI.

That if she ever have a child; and thou,
Quick Nature! I adjure thee by thy God,
That thou be fruitful in her, and encrease
And multiply, fulfilling his command,
And my deep imprecation! May it be
A hideous likeness of herself, that as
From a distorting mirror, she may see
Her image mixed with what she most abhors,
Smiling upon her from her nursing breast.
And that the child may from its infancy
Grow, day by day, more wicked and deform'd,
Turning her mother's love to misery:
And that both she and it may live until
It shall repay her care and pain with hate,
Or what may else be more unnatural,
So he may hunt her through the clamorous scoffs
Of the loud world to a dishonour'd grave.
Shall I revoke this curse? Go, bid her come,
Before my words are chronicled in heaven.

[*Exit* LUCRETIA.

I do not feel as if I were a man,
But like a fiend appointed to chastise
The offences of some unremember'd world.
My blood is running up and down my veins;
A fearful pleasure makes it prick and tingle:
I feel a giddy sickness of strange awe;
My heart is beating with an expectation
Of horrid joy.

Enter LUCRETIA.

What? Speak!

LUCRETIA.

She bids thee curse;
And if thy curses, as they cannot do,
Could kill her soul—

CENCI.

She would not come. 'T is well,
I can do both: first take what I demand,
And then extort concession. To thy chamber!
Fly ere I spurn thee: and beware this night
That thou cross not my footsteps. It were safer
To come between the tiger and his prey.

[*Exit* LUCRETIA.

It must be late; mine eyes grow weary dim
With unaccustom'd heaviness of sleep.
Conscience! Oh! thou most insolent of lies!
They say that sleep, that healing dew of heaven,
Steeps not in balm the foldings of the brain
Which thinks thee an impostor. I will go
First to belie thee with an hour of rest,
Which will be deep and calm, I feel: and then—
O, multitudinous Hell, the fiends will shake
Thine arches with the laughter of their joy!
There shall be lamentation heard in Heaven
As o'er an angel fallen; and upon Earth

All good shall droop and sicken, and ill things
Shall with a spirit of unnatural life
Stir and be quicken'd—even as I am now. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.

Before the Castle of Petrella.

Enter BEATRICE *and* LUCRETIA *above on the ramparts.*

BEATRICE.

They come not yet.

LUCRETIA.

'T is scarce midnight.

BEATRICE.

How slow
Behind the course of thought, even sick with speed,
Lags leaden-footed time!

LUCRETIA.

The minutes pass—
If he should wake before the deed is done?

BEATRICE.

O, Mother! He must never wake again.
What thou hast said persuades me that our act
Will but dislodge a spirit of deep hell
Out of a human form.

LUCRETIA.

'T is true he spoke
Of death and judgment with strange confidence
For one so wicked; as a man believing
In God, yet recking not of good or ill.
And yet to die without confession!—

BEATRICE.

Oh!
Believe that heaven is merciful and just,
And will not add our dread necessity
To the amount of his offences.

Enter OLIMPIO *and* MARZIO, *below.*

LUCRETIA.

See,
They come.

BEATRICE.

All mortal things must hasten thus
To their dark end. Let us go down.

[*Exeunt* LUCRETIA *and* BEATRICE *from above.*

OLIMPIO.

How feel you to this work?

MARZIO.

As one who thinks
A thousand crowns excellent market price
For an old murderer's life. Your cheeks are pale.

OLIMPIO.

It is the white reflection of your own,
Which you call pale.

MARZIO.

Is that their natural hue?

OLIMPIO.

Or 't is my hate and the deferr'd desire
To wreak it, which extinguishes their blood.

MARZIO.

You are inclined then to this business?

OLIMPIO.

Aye.
If one should bribe me with a thousand crowns
To kill a serpent which had stung my child,
I could not be more willing.

Enter BEATRICE *and* LUCRETIA, *below.*

Noble ladies!

BEATRICE.

Are ye resolved?

OLIMPIO.

Is he asleep?

MARZIO.

Is all
Quiet?

LUCRETIA.

I mixed an opiate with his drink:
He sleeps so soundly—

BEATRICE.

That his death will be
But as a change of sin-chastising dreams,
A dark continuance of the Hell within him,
Which God extinguish! But ye are resolved?
Ye know it is a high and holy deed?

OLIMPIO.

We are resolved.

MARZIO.

As to the how this act
Be warranted, it rests with you.

BEATRICE.

Well, follow!

OLIMPIO.

Hush! Hark! What noise is that?

MARZIO.

Ha! some one comes!

BEATRICE.

Ye conscience-stricken cravens, rock to rest
Your baby hearts. It is the iron gate,
Which ye left open, swinging to the wind,
That enters whistling as in scorn. Come, follow!
And be your steps like mine, light, quick, and bold.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.

An Apartment in the Castle.

Enter BEATRICE *and* LUCRETIA.

LUCRETIA.

They are about it now.

BEATRICE.

Nay, it is done.

LUCRETIA.

I have not heard him groan.

BEATRICE.

He will not groan.

LUCRETIA.

What sound is that?

BEATRICE.

List! 't is the tread of feet
About his bed.

LUCRETIA.

My God!
If he be now a cold stiff corpse—

BEATRICE.

O, fear not
What may be done, but what is left undone:
The act seals all.

Enter OLIMPIO *and* MARZIO.

Is it accomplished?

MARZIO.

What?

OLIMPIO.

Did you not call?

BEATRICE.

When?

OLIMPIO.

Now.

BEATRICE.

I ask if all is over?

OLIMPIO.

We dare not kill an old and sleeping man;
His thin grey hair, his stern and reverent brow,
His veined hands crossed on his heaving breast,
And the calm innocent sleep in which he lay,
Quell'd me. Indeed, indeed, I cannot do it.

MARZIO.

But I was bolder; for I chid Olimpio,
And bade him bear his wrongs to his own grave,
And leave me the reward. And now my knife
Touch'd the loose wrinkled throat, when the old man
Stirr'd in his sleep, and said, "God! hear, O, hear,
A father's curse! What, art thou not our father?"
And then he laughed. I knew it was the ghost
Of my dead father speaking through his lips,
And could not kill him.

BEATRICE.

Miserable slaves!
Where, if ye dare not kill a sleeping man,
Found ye the boldness to return to me
With such a deed undone? Base palterers!
Cowards and traitors! Why, the very conscience
Which ye would sell for gold and for revenge
Is an equivocation: it sleeps over
A thousand daily acts disgracing men;
And when a deed where mercy insults heaven—
Why do I talk?

[*Snatching a dagger from one of them and raising it.*

Hadst thou a tongue to say,
She murder'd her own father, I must do it!
But never dream ye shall outlive him long!

OLIMPIO.

Stop, for God's sake!

MARZIO.

I will go back and kill him.

OLIMPIO.

Give me the weapon: we must do thy will.

BEATRICE.

Take it! Depart! Return!

[*Exeunt* OLIMPIO *and* MARZIO.

How pale thou art!
We do but that which 't were a deadly crime
To leave undone.

LUCRETIA.

Would it were done!

BEATRICE.

Even whilst
That doubt is passing through your mind, the world
Is conscious of a change. Darkness and hell
Have swallow'd up the vapour they sent forth
To blacken the sweet light of life. My breath
Comes, methinks, lighter and the jellied blood
Runs freely through my veins. Hark!

Enter OLIMPIO *and* MARZIO.

He is—

OLIMPIO.

Dead!

MARZIO.

We strangled him, that there might be no blood;
And then we threw his heavy corpse i' the garden
Under the balcony; 't will seem it fell.

BEATRICE (*giving them a bag of coin*).

Here take this gold, and hasten to your homes.
And, Marzio, because thou wast only awed
By that which made me tremble, wear thou this!

[*Clothes him in a rich mantle.*

It was the mantle which my grandfather
Wore in his high prosperity, and men
Envied his state: so may they envy thine.
Thou wert a weapon in the hand of God
To a just use. Live long and thrive! And, mark,
If thou hast crimes, repent: this deed is none.

[*A horn is sounded.*

LUCRETIA.

Hark, 't is the castle horn; my God! it sounds
Like the last trump.

BEATRICE.

Some tedious guest is coming.

LUCRETIA.

The drawbridge is let down; there is a tramp
Of horses in the court; fly, hide yourselves!

[*Exeunt* OLIMPIO *and* MARZIO.

BEATRICE.

Let us retire to counterfeit deep rest;
I scarcely need to counterfeit it now:
The spirit which doth reign within these limbs
Seems strangely undisturb'd. I could even sleep
Fearless and calm: all ill is surely past.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.

Another apartment in the Castle.

Enter on one side the Legate SAVELLA *introduced by a Servant, and on the other* LUCRETIA *and* BERNARDO.

SAVELLA.

Lady, my duty to his Holiness
Be my excuse, that thus unseasonably
I break upon your rest. I must speak with
Count Cenci; doth he sleep?

LUCRETIA (*in a hurried and confused manner*).

I think he sleeps;
Yet wake him not; I pray, spare me awhile,
He is a wicked and wrathful man;
Should he be roused out of his sleep to-night,
Which is, I know, a hell of angry dreams,
It were not well; indeed it were not well.
Wait till day break.—
(*Aside.*) O, I am deadly sick!

SAVELLA.

I grieve thus to distress you, but the Count
Must answer charges of the gravest import,
And suddenly; such my commission is.

LUCRETIA (*with increased agitation*).

I dare not rouse him: I know none who dare—
'T were perilous;—you might as safely waken

A serpent; or a corpse in which some fiend
Were laid to sleep.

SAVELLA.

Lady, my moments here
Are counted. I must rouse him from his sleep,
Since none else dare.

LUCRETIA (*aside*).

O, terror! O, despair!
(*To* BERNARDO.) Bernardo, conduct you the Lord Legate to
Your father's chamber.

[*Exeunt* SAVELLA *and* BERNARDO.

Enter BEATRICE.

BEATRICE.

'T is a messenger
Come to arrest the culprit who now stands
Before the throne of unappealable God.
Both Earth and Heaven, consenting arbiters,
Acquit our deed.

LUCRETIA.

Oh, agony of fear!
Would that he yet might live! Even now I heard
The legate's followers whisper as they pass'd
They had a warrant for his instant death.
All was prepared by unforbidden means
Which we must pay so dearly, having done.
Even now they search the tower, and find the body;
Now they suspect the truth; now they consult
Before they come to tax us with the fact;
O, horrible, 't is all discover'd!

BEATRICE.

Mother,
What is done wisely, is done well. Be bold
As thou art just. 'T is like a truant child
To fear that others know what thou hast done,
Even from thine own strong consciousness, and thus
Write on unsteady eyes and alter'd cheeks
All thou wouldst hide. Be faithful to thyself,
And fear no other witness but thy fear.
For if, as cannot be, some circumstance
Should rise in accusation, we can blind
Suspicion with such cheap astonishment,
Or overbear it with such guiltless pride,
As murderers cannot feign. The deed is done,
And what may follow now regards not me.
I am as universal as the light;
Free as the earth-surrounding air; as firm
As the world's centre. Consequence, to me,
Is as the wind which strikes the solid rock
But shakes it not.

[*A cry within and tumult.*

BERNARDO.

Murder! Murder! Murder!

Enter BERNARDO *and* SAVELLA.

SAVELLA (*to his followers*).

Go, search the castle round; sound the alarm;
Look to the gates that none escape!

BEATRICE.

What now?

BERNARDO.

I know not what to say—my father 's dead.

BEATRICE.

How, dead! he only sleeps; you mistake, brother.
His sleep is very calm, very like death;
'T is wonderful how well a tyrant sleeps.
He is not dead?

BERNARDO.

Dead; murdered.

LUCRETIA (*with extreme agitation*).

Oh, no, no,
He is not murder'd, though he may be dead;
I have alone the keys of those apartments.

SAVELLA.

Ha! Is it so?

BEATRICE.

My Lord, I pray excuse us;
We will retire; my mother is not well:
She seems quite overcome with this strange horror.

[*Exeunt* LUCRETIA *and* BEATRICE.

SAVELLA.

Can you suspect who may have murder'd him?

BERNARDO.

I know not what to think.

SAVELLA.

Can you name any
Who had an interest in his death?

BERNARDO.

Alas!
I can name none who had not, and those most
Who most lament that such a deed is done;
My mother, and my sister, and myself.

SAVELLA.

'T is strange! There were clear marks of violence.
I found the old man's body in the moonlight,
Hanging beneath the window of his chamber
Among the branches of a pine: he could not
Have fallen there, for all his limbs lay heap'd
And effortless; 't is true there was no blood.—
Favour me, Sir—it much imports your house
That all should be made clear—to tell the ladies
That I request their presence.

[*Exit* BERNARDO.

Enter Guards, bringing in MARZIO.

GUARD.

We have one.

OFFICER.

My Lord, we found this ruffian and another
Lurking among the rocks; there is no doubt
But that they are the murderers of Count Cenci:
Each had a bag of coin; this fellow wore
A gold-inwoven robe, which, shining bright
Under the dark rocks to the glimmering moon,
Betray'd them to our notice: the other fell
Desperately fighting.

SAVELLA.

What does he confess?

OFFICER.

He keeps firm silence; but these lines found on him
May speak.

SAVELLA.

Their language is at least sincere.

[*Reads.*

« TO THE LADY BEATRICE.

« That the atonement of what my nature
Sickens to conjecture may soon arrive,
I send thee, at thy brother's desire, those
Who will speak and do more than I dare
Write.—Thy devoted servant,

ORSINO. »

Enter LUCRETIA, BEATRICE, *and* BERNARDO.

Knowest thou this writing, Lady?

BEATRICE.

No.

SAVELLA.

Nor thou?

LUCRETIA (*her conduct throughout the scene is marked by extreme agitation*).

Where was it found? What is it? It should be
Orsino's hand! It speaks of that strange horror
Which never yet found utterance, but which made
Between that hapless child and her dead father
A gulf of obscure hatred.

SAVELLA.

Is it so?
Is it true, Lady, that thy father did
Such outrages as to awaken in thee
Unfilial hate?

BEATRICE.

Not hate, 't was more than hate;
This is most true, yet wherefore question me?

SAVELLA.

There is a deed demanding question done;
Thou hast a secret which will answer not.

BEATRICE.

What sayest? My Lord, your words are bold and rash.

SAVELLA.

I do arrest all present in the name
Of the Pope's Holiness. You must to Rome.

LUCRETIA.

O, not to Rome! Indeed we are not guilty.

BEATRICE.

Guilty! Who dares talk of guilt? My Lord,
I am more innocent of parricide
Than is a child born fatherless—Dear Mother,
Your gentleness and patience are no shield
For this keen-judging world, this two-edged lie,
Which seems, but is not. What! will human laws,
Rather will ye who are their ministers,
Bar all access to retribution first,
And then, when Heaven doth interpose to do
What ye neglect, arming familiar things
To the redress of an unwonted crime,
Make ye the victims who demanded it
Culprits? 'T is ye are culprits! That poor wretch
Who stands so pale, and trembling, and amazed,
If it be true he murder'd Cenci, was
A sword in the right hand of justest God.
Wherefore should I have wielded it? unless
The crimes which mortal tongue dare never name,
God therefore scruples to avenge.

SAVELLA.

You own
That you desired his death?

BEATRICE.

It would have been
A crime no less than his, if for one moment
That fierce desire had faded in my heart.
'T is true I did believe, and hope, and pray,
Aye, I even knew—for God is wise and just,
That some strange sudden death hung over him.
'T is true that this did happen, and most true
There was no other rest for me on earth,
No other hope in Heaven—now what of this?

SAVELLA.

Strange thoughts beget strange deeds; and here are both
I judge thee not.

BEATRICE.

And yet, if you arrest me,
You are the judge and executioner
Of that which is the life of life: the breath
Of accusation kills an innocent name,
And leaves for lame acquittal the poor life,
Which is a mask without it. 'T is most false
That I am guilty of foul parricide;
Although I must rejoice, for justest cause,
That other hands have sent my father's soul
To ask the mercy he denied to me.
Now leave us free: stain not a noble house
With vague surmises of rejected crime;
Add to our sufferings and your own neglect
No heavier sum; let them have been enough:
Leave us the wreck we have.

SAVELLA.

I dare not, Lady.
I pray that you prepare yourselves for Rome:
There the Pope's further pleasure will be known.

LUCRETIA.

O, not to Rome! O, take us not to Rome!

BEATRICE.

Why not to Rome, dear mother? There, as here,
Our innocence is as an armed heel
To trample accusation. God is there
As here, and with his shadow ever clothes
The innocent, the injured, and the weak;
And such are we. Cheer up, dear Lady, lean
On me; collect your wandering thoughts. My Lord,
As soon as you have taken some refreshment,
And had all such examinations made
Upon the spot, as may be necessary
To the full understanding of this matter,
We shall be ready. Mother; will you come?

LUCRETIA.

Ha! they will bind us to the rack, and wrest
Self-accusation from our agony!
Will Giacomo be there? Orsino? Marzio?
All present; all confronted; all demanding
Each from the other's countenance the thing
Which is in every heart! O, misery!

[*She faints, and is borne out.*

SAVELLA.

She faints: an ill appearance this.

BEATRICE.

My Lord,
She knows not yet the uses of the world.
She fears that power is as a beast which grasps
And loosens not: a snake whose look transmutes
All things to guilt which is its nutriment.
She cannot know how well the supine slaves
Of blind authority read the truth of things
When written on a brow of guilelessness:
She sees not yet triumphant Innocence
Stand at the judgment-seat of mortal man,
A judge and an accuser of the wrong
Which drags it there. Prepare yourself, My Lord;
Our suite will join yours in the court below.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.

An Apartment in ORSINO's *Palace.*

Enter ORSINO *and* GIACOMO.

GIACOMO.

Do evil deeds thus quickly come to end?
O, that the vain remorse which must chastise
Crimes done, had but as loud a voice to warn
As its keen sting is mortal to avenge!
O, that the hour when present had cast off
The mantle of its mystery, and shown
The ghastly form with which it now returns
When its scared game is roused, cheering the hounds
Of conscience to their prey! Alas! alas!
It was a wicked thought, a piteous deed,
To kill an old and hoary-headed father.

ORSINO.

It has turn'd out unluckily, in truth.

GIACOMO.

To violate the sacred doors of sleep;
To cheat kind nature of the placid death
Which she prepares for overwearied age;
To drag from Heaven an unrepentant soul
Which might have quench'd in reconciling prayers
A life of burning crimes—

ORSINO.

You cannot say
I urged you to the deed.

GIACOMO.

O, had I never
Found in thy smooth and ready countenance
The mirror of my darkest thoughts; hadst thou
Never with hints and questions made me look
Upon the monster of my thought, until
It grew familiar to desire—

ORSINO.

'T is thus
Men cast the blame of their unprosperous acts
Upon the abettors of their own resolve;
Or any thing but their weak, guilty selves.
And yet, confess the truth, it is the peril
In which you stand that gives you this pale sickness
Of penitence; confess, 't is fear disguised
From its own shame that takes the mantle now
Of thin remorse. What if we yet were safe?

GIACOMO.

How can that be? Already Beatrice,
Lucretia and the murderer, are in prison.
I doubt not officers are, whilst we speak,
Sent to arrest us.

ORSINO.

I have all prepared
For instant flight. We can escape even now,
So we take fleet occasion by the hair.

GIACOMO.

Rather expire in tortures, as I may.
What! will you cast by self-accusing flight
Assured conviction upon Beatrice?
She, who alone in this unnatural work,
Stands like God's angel minister'd upon
By fiends; avenging such a nameless wrong
As turns black parricide to piety;
Whilst we for basest ends—I fear, Orsino,
While I consider all your words and looks,
Comparing them with your proposal now,
That you must be a villain. For what end
Could you engage in such a perilous crime,
Training me on with hints, and signs, and smiles,
Even to this gulf? Thou art no liar; No,
Thou art a lie! traitor and murderer!
Coward and slave! But, no—defend thyself; [*Drawing.*
Let the sword speak what the indignant tongue
Disdains to brand thee with.

ORSINO.

Put up your weapon.
Is it the desperation of your fear
Makes you thus rash and sudden with your friend,
Now ruin'd for your sake? If honest anger
Have moved you, know, that what I just proposed
Was but to try you. As for me, I think,
Thankless affection led me to this point,
From which, if my firm temper could repent,
I cannot now recede. Even whilst we speak
The ministers of justice wait below:
They grant me these brief moments. Now, if you
Have any word of melancholy comfort
To speak to your pale wife, 't were best to pass
Out at the postern, and avoid them so.

GIACOMO.

Oh, generous friend! How canst thou pardon me?
Would that my life could purchase thine!

ORSINO.

That wish
Now comes a day too late. Haste; fare thee well!
Hear'st thou not steps along the corridor?

[*Exit* GIACOMO.

I'm sorry for it; but the guards are waiting
At his own gate, and such was my contrivance
That I might rid me both of him and them.
I thought to act a solemn comedy
Upon the painted scene of this new world,
And to attain my own peculiar ends
By some such plot of mingled good and ill
As others weave; but there arose a Power
Which grasp'd and snapp'd the threads of my device,
And turn'd it to a net of ruin—Ha!

[*A shout is heard.*

Is that my name I hear proclaim'd abroad?
But I will pass, wrapt in a vile disguise;
Rags on my back, and a false innocence
Upon my face, through the misdeeming crowd
Which judges by what seems. 'T is easy then
For a new name and for a country new,
And a new life, fashion'd on old desires,
To change the honours of abandon'd Rome.
And these must be the masks of that within,
Which must remain unalter'd.—Oh, I fear
That what is pass'd will never let me rest!
Why, when none else is conscious, but myself,
Of my misdeeds, should my own heart's contempt
Trouble me? Have I not the power to fly
My own reproaches? Shall I be the slave
Of—what? A word? which those of this false world
Employ against each other, not themselves;
As men wear daggers not for self-offence.
But if I am mistaken, where shall I
Find the disguise to hide me from myself,
As now I skulk from every other eye? [*Exit.*

SCENE II.

A Hall of Justice.

CAMILLO, JUDGES, *etc., are discovered seated;* MARZIO *is led in.*

FIRST JUDGE.

Accused, do you persist in your denial?
I ask you, are you innocent, or guilty?
I demand who were the participators
In your offence? Speak truth, and the whole truth.

MARZIO.

My God! I did not kill him; I know nothing;
Olimpio sold the robe to me from which
You would infer my guilt.

SECOND JUDGE.

Away with him!

FIRST JUDGE.

Dare you, with lips yet white from the rack's kiss,
Speak false? Is it so soft a questioner,
That you would bandy lover's talk with it,
Till it wind out your life and soul? Away!

MARZIO.

Spare me! O, spare! I will confess.

FIRST JUDGE.

Then speak.

MARZIO.

I strangled him in his sleep.

FIRST JUDGE.

Who urged you to it?

MARZIO.

His own son Giacomo, and the young prelate
Orsino sent me to Petrella; there
The ladies Beatrice and Lucretia
Tempted me with a thousand crowns, and I
And my companion forthwith murder'd him.
Now let me die.

FIRST JUDGE.

This sounds as bad as truth. Guards, there,
Lead forth the prisoners!

Enter LUCRETIA, BEATRICE, *and* GIACOMO, *guarded.*

Look upon this man;
When did you see him last?

BEATRICE.

We never saw him.

MARZIO.

You know me too well, Lady Beatrice.

BEATRICE.

I know thee! How? where? when?

MARZIO.

You know 't was I
Whom you did urge with menaces and bribes
To kill your father. When the thing was done
You clothed me in a robe of woven gold
And bade me thrive: how I have thriven, you see.
You, my Lord Giacomo, Lady Lucretia,
You know that what I speak is true.

[BEATRICE *advances towards him; he covers his face, and shrinks back.*

Oh, dart
The terrible resentment of those eyes
On the dread earth! Turn them away from me!
They wound: 't was torture forced the truth. My Lords,
Having said this, let me be led to death.

BEATRICE.

Poor wretch! I pity thee: yet stay awhile.

CAMILLO.

Guards, lead him not away.

BEATRICE.

Cardinal Camillo,
You have a good repute for gentleness
And wisdom: can it be that you sit here
To countenance a wicked farce like this?
When some obscure, and trembling slave is dragg'd
From sufferings which might shake the sternest heart,
And bade to answer, not as he believes,
But as those may suspect or do desire,
Whose questions thence suggest their own reply:
And that in peril of such hideous torments
As merciful God spares even the damn'd. Speak now
The thing you surely know, which is that you,
If your fine frame were stretch'd upon that wheel,
And you were told, Confess that you did poison
Your little nephew: that fair blue-eyed child
Who was the load-star of your life; and though
All see, since his most swift and piteous death,
That day and night, and heaven and earth, and time,
And all the things hoped for or done therein
Are changed to you, through your exceeding grief,
Yet you would say, I confess any thing—
And beg from your tormentors, like that slave,
The refuge of dishonourable death.
I pray thee, Cardinal, that thou assert
My innocence.

CAMILLO (*much moved*).

What shall we think, my lords?
Shame on these tears! I thought the heart was frozen
Which is their fountain. I would pledge my soul
That she is guiltless.

JUDGE.

Yet she must be tortured.

CAMILLO.

I would as soon have tortured mine own nephew
(If he now lived, he would be just her age;
His hair, too, was her colour, and his eyes
Like hers in shape, but blue, and not so deep):
As that most perfect image of God's love
That ever came sorrowing upon the earth.
She is as pure as speechless infancy!

JUDGE.

Well, be her purity on your head, my lord,
If you forbid the rack. His Holiness
Enjoin'd us to pursue this monstrous crime
By the severest forms of law; nay even
To stretch a point against the criminals.
The prisoners stand accused of parricide,
Upon such evidence as justifies
Torture.

BEATRICE.

What evidence? This man's?

JUDGE.

Even so.

BEATRICE (*to* MARZIO).

Come near. And who art thou, thus chosen forth
Out of the multitude of living men
To kill the innocent?

MARZIO.

I am Marzio,
Thy father's vassal.

BEATRICE.

Fix thine eyes on mine;
Answer to what I ask. [*Turning to the Judges.*
I prithee mark
His countenance: unlike bold calumny
Which sometimes dares not speak the thing it looks,
He dares not look the thing he speaks, but bends
His gaze on the blind earth.
(*To* MARZIO.) What! wilt thou say
That I did murder my own father?

MARZIO.

Oh!
Spare me! My brain swims round—I cannot speak—
It was that horrid torture forced the truth.
Take me away! Let her not look on me!
I am a guilty miserable wretch;
I have said all I know; now, let me die!

BEATRICE.

My Lords, if by my nature I had been
So stern, as to have plann'd the crime alleged,
Which your suspicions dictate to this slave,
And the rack makes him utter, do you think
I should have left this two-edged instrument
Of my misdeed; this man, this bloody knife
With my own name engraven on the heft,
Lying unsheathed amid a world of foes,
For my own death? That with such horrible need
For deepest silence, I should have neglected
So trivial a precaution, as the making
His tomb the keeper of a secret written
On a thief's memory? What is his poor life?
What are a thousand lives? A parricide
Had trampled them like dust; and see, he lives!
[*Turning to* MARZIO.
And thou—

MARZIO.

Oh, spare me! Speak to me no more!
That stern yet piteous look, those solemn tones,
Wound worse than torture.
(*To the Judges.*) I have told it all;
For pity's sake lead me away to death.

CAMILLO.

Guards, lead him nearer the lady Beatrice:
He shrinks from her regard like autumn's leaf
From the keen breath of the serenest north.

BEATRICE.

Oh, thou who tremblest on the giddy verge
Of life and death, pause ere thou answerest me;
So mayest thou answer God with less dismay:
What evil have we done thee? I, alas!
Have lived but on this earth a few sad years,
And so my lot was order'd that a father
First turn'd the moments of awakening life
To drops, each poisoning youth's sweet hope; and then
Stabb'd with one blow my everlasting soul;
And my untainted fame; and even that peace
Which sleeps within the core of the heart's heart,
But the wound was not mortal; so my hate
Became the only worship I could lift
To our great Father, who in pity and love,
Armed thee, as thou dost say, to cut him off;
And thus his wrong becomes my accusation:
And art thou the accuser? If thou hopest
Mercy in heaven, show justice upon earth:
Worse than a bloody hand is a hard heart.
If thou hast done murders, made thy life's path
Over the trampled laws of God and man,
Rush not before thy Judge, and say: "My Maker,
I have done this and more; for there was one
Who was most pure and innocent on earth;
And because she endured what never any
Guilty or innocent endured before:
Because her wrongs could not be told, not thought;
Because thy hand at length did rescue her;
I with my words kill'd her and all her kin."
Think, I adjure you, what it is to slay
The reverence living in the minds of men
Towards our ancient house, and stainless fame!
Think what it is to strangle infant pity,
Cradled in the belief of guileless looks,
Till it become a crime to suffer. Think
What 't is to blot with infamy and blood
All that which shows like innocence, and is,
Hear me, great God! I swear, most innocent,
So that the world lose all discrimination
Between the sly, fierce, wild regard of guilt,
And that which now compels thee to reply
To what I ask: Am I, or am I not
A parricide?

MARZIO.

Thou art not!

JUDGE.

What is this?

MARZIO.

I here declare those whom I did accuse
Are innocent. 'T is I alone am guilty.

JUDGE.

Drag him away to torments; let them be
Subtle and long drawn out, to tear the folds
Of the heart's inmost cell. Unbind him not
Till he confess.

MARZIO.

Torture me as ye will:
A keener pain has wrung a higher truth
From my last breath. She is most innocent!
Bloodhounds, not men, glut yourselves well with me!
I will not give you that fine piece of nature
To rend and ruin.
[*Exit* MARZIO, *guarded.*

CAMILLO.

What say ye now, my Lords?

JUDGE.

Let tortures strain the truth till it be white
As snow thrice-sifted by the frozen wind.

CAMILLO.

Yet stain'd with blood.

JUDGE (*to* BEATRICE).

Know you this paper, lady?

BEATRICE.

Entrap me not with questions. Who stands here
As my accuser? Ha! wilt thou be he,
Who art my judge? Accuser, witness, judge,
What, all in one? Here is Orsino's name;
Where is Orsino? Let his eye meet mine.
What means this scrawl? Alas! ye know not what,
And therefore on the chance that it may be
Some evil, will ye kill us?

Enter an Officer.

OFFICER.

Marzio 's dead.

JUDGE.

What did he say?

OFFICER.

Nothing. As soon as we
Had bound him on the wheel, he smiled on us,
As one who baffles a deep adversary;
And holding his breath, died.

JUDGE.

There remains nothing
But to apply the question to those prisoners,
Who yet remain stubborn.

CAMILLO.

I overrule
Further proceedings, and in the behalf
Of these most innocent and noble persons
Will use my interest with the Holy Father.

JUDGE.

Let the Pope's pleasure then be done. Meanwhile
Conduct these culprits each to separate cells;
And be the engines ready: for this night
If the Pope's resolution be as grave,
Pious and just as once, I 'll wring the truth
Out of those nerves and sinews, groan by groan.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.

The Cell of a Prison.

BEATRICE *is discovered asleep on a couch.*

Enter BERNARDO.

BERNARDO.

How gently slumber rests upon her face!
Like the last thoughts of some day sweetly spent
Closing in night and dreams, and so prolonged.
After such torments as she bore last night,
How light and soft her breathing comes! Ah, me!
Methinks that I shall never sleep again.
But I must shake the heavenly dew of rest
From this sweet folded flower, thus—wake! awake!
What, sister, canst thou sleep?

BEATRICE (*awaking*).

I was just dreaming
That we were all in Paradise. Thou knowest
This cell seems like a kind of Paradise
After our father's presence.

BERNARDO.

Dear, dear sister,
Would that thy dream were not a dream! O, God!
How shall I tell?

BEATRICE.

What wouldst thou tell, sweet brother?

BERNARDO.

Look not so calm and happy, or, even whilst
I stand considering what I have to say,
My heart will break.

BEATRICE.

See now, thou makest me weep:
How very friendless thou wouldst be, dear child,
If I were dead. Say what thou hast to say.

BERNARDO.

They have confess'd; they could endure no more
The tortures—

BEATRICE.

Ha! What was there to confess?
They must have told some weak and wicked lie
To flatter their tormentors. Have they said
That they were guilty? O white innocence!
That thou shouldst wear the mask of guilt to hide
Thine awful and serenest countenance
From those who know thee not!

Enter JUDGE *with* LUCRETIA *and* GIACOMO, *guarded.*

Ignoble hearts!
For some brief spasms of pain, which are at least
As mortal as the limbs through which they pass,
Are centuries of high splendour laid in dust?
And that eternal honour which should live
Sunlike, above the reek of mortal fame,
Changed to a mockery and a bye-word? What!
Will you give up these bodies to be dragg'd
At horses' heels, so that our hair should sweep
The footsteps of the vain and senseless crowd,
Who, that they may make our calamity
Their worship and their spectacle, will leave
The churches and the theatres as void
As their own hearts? Shall the light multitude
Fling, at their choice, curses or faded pity,
Sad funeral flowers to deck a living corpse,
Upon us as we pass to pass away,
And leave—what memory of our having been?
Infamy, blood, terror, despair? O thou,
Who wert a mother to the parentless,
Kill not thy child! Let not her wrongs kill thee!
Brother, lie down with me upon the rack,
And let us each be silent as a corpse;
It soon will be as soft as any grave.
'T is but the falsehood it can wring from fear
Makes the rack cruel.

GIACOMO.

They will tear the truth
Even from thee at last, those cruel pains:
For pity's sake say thou art guilty now.

LUCRETIA.

O, speak the truth! Let us all quickly die;
And after death, God is our judge, not they;
He will have mercy on us.

BERNARDO.

If indeed
It can be true, say so, dear sister mine;
And then the Pope will surely pardon you,
And all be well.

JUDGE.

Confess, or I will warp
Your limbs with such keen tortures—

BEATRICE.

Tortures! Turn
The rack henceforth into a spinning-wheel!
Torture your dog, that he may tell when last
He lapp'd the blood his master shed—not me!
My pangs are of the mind, and of the heart,
And of the soul; aye, of the inmost soul,
Which weeps within tears as of burning gall
To see, in this ill world where none are true,
My kindred false to their deserted selves,
And with considering all the wretched life
Which I have lived, and its now wretched end,
And the small justice shown by Heaven and Earth
To me or mine; and what a tyrant thou art,
And what slaves these; and what a world we make,
The oppressor and the oppress'd—such pangs compel
My answer. What is it thou wouldst with me?

JUDGE.

Art thou not guilty of thy father's death?

BEATRICE.

Or wilt thou rather tax high-judging God
That he permitted such an act as that
Which I have suffer'd, and which he beheld;
Made it unutterable, and took from it
All refuge, all revenge, all consequence,
But that which thou hast call'd my father's death?
Which is or is not what men call a crime,
Which either I have done, or have not done;
Say what ye will. I shall deny no more.
If ye desire it thus, thus let it be,
And so an end of all. Now do your will;
No other pains shall force another word.

JUDGE.

She is convicted, but has not confess'd.
Be it enough. Until their final sentence
Let none have converse with them. You, young Lord,
Linger not here!

BEATRICE.

O, tear him not away!

JUDGE.

Guards! do your duty.

BERNARDO (*embracing* BEATRICE).

Oh! would ye divide
Body from soul?

OFFICER.

That is the headsman's business.

[*Exeunt all but* LUCRETIA, BEATRICE *and* GIACOMO.

GIACOMO.

Have I confessed? Is it all over now?
No hope! No refuge! O, weak, wicked tongue
Which hast destroy'd me, would that thou hadst been
Cut out and thrown to dogs first! To have killed
My father first, and then betrayed my sister;
Aye, thee! the one thing innocent and pure
In this black guilty world, to that which I
So well deserve! My wife! my little ones!
Destitute, helpless; and I—Father! God!
Canst thou forgive even the unforgiving,
When their full hearts break thus, thus!—

[*Covers his face and weeps.*

LUCRETIA.

O, my child!
To what a dreadful end are we all come!
Why did I yield? Why did I not sustain
Those torments? Oh! that I were all dissolved
Into these fast and unavailing tears,
Which flow and feel not!

BEATRICE.

What 't was weak to do,
'T is weaker to lament, once being done;
Take cheer! The God who knew my wrong, and made
Our speedy act the angel of his wrath,
Seems, and but seems to have abandon'd us.
Let us not think that we shall die for this.
Brother, sit near me; give me your firm hand,
You had a manly heart. Bear up! bear up!
Oh! dearest Lady, put your gentle head
Upon my lap, and try to sleep awhile:
Your eyes look pale, hollow and overworn,
With heaviness of watching and slow grief.
Come, I will sing you some low, sleepy tune,
Not cheerful, nor yet sad; some dull old thing,
Some outworn and unused monotony,
Such as our country gossips sing and spin,
Till they almost forget they live: lie down!
So, that will do. Have I forgot the words?
Faith! they are sadder than I thought they were.

SONG.

False friend, wilt thou smile or weep
When my life is laid asleep?
Little cares for a smile or a tear,
The clay-cold corpse upon the bier!
Farewell! Heigh ho!
What is this whispers low?
There is a snake in thy smile, my dear;
And bitter poison within thy tear.

Sweet Sleep! were Death like to thee,
Or if thou couldst mortal be,
I would close these eyes of pain;
When to wake? Never again.
O World! farewell!
Listen to the passing bell!
It says, thou and I must part,
With a light and a heavy heart.

[*The scene closes.*

SCENE IV.

A Hall of the Prison.

Enter CAMILLO *and* BERNARDO.

CAMILLO.

The Pope is stern; not to be moved or bent.
He look'd as calm and keen as is the engine
Which tortures and which kills, exempt itself
From aught that it inflicts; a marble form,
A rite, a law, a custom: not a man.
He frown'd, as if to frown had been the trick
Of his machinery, on the advocates
Presenting the defences, which he tore
And threw behind, muttering with hoarse, harsh voice:
«Which among ye defended their old father
Kill'd in his sleep?» Then to another: «Thou
Dost this in virtue of thy place; 't is well.»
He turn'd to me then, looking deprecation,
And said these three words, coldly: «They must die.»

BERNARDO.

And yet you left him not?

CAMILLO.

I urged him still;
Pleading, as I could guess, the devilish wrong
Which prompted your unnatural parent's death:
And he replied, «Paolo Santa Croce
Murdered his mother yester evening,
And he is fled. Parricide grows so rife
That soon, for some just cause no doubt, the young
Will strangle us all, dozing in our chairs.
Authority, and power, and hoary hair
Are grown crimes capital. You are my nephew,
You come to ask their pardon; stay a moment;
Here is their sentence; never see me more
Till, to the letter, it be all fulfill'd.»

BERNARDO.

O, God, not so! I did believe indeed
That all you said was but sad preparation
For happy news. O, there are words and looks
To bend the sternest purpose! Once I knew them,

Now I forget them at my dearest need.
What think you if I seek him out, and bathe
His feet and robe with hot and bitter tears?
Importune him with prayers, vexing his brain
With my perpetual cries, until in rage
He strike me with his pastoral cross, and trample
Upon my prostrate head, so that my blood
May stain the senseless dust on which he treads,
And remorse waken mercy? I will do it!
O, wait till I return! [*Rushes out.*

CAMILLO.

Alas! poor boy!
A wreck-devoted seaman thus might pray
To the deaf sea.

Enter LUCRETIA, BEATRICE, *and* GIACOMO, *guarded.*

BEATRICE.

I hardly dare to fear
That thou bring'st other news than a just pardon.

CAMILLO.

May God in heaven be less inexorable
To the Pope's prayers, than he has been to mine.
Here is the sentence and the warrant.

BEATRICE (*wildly*).

Oh,
My God! Can it be possible I have
To die so suddenly? So young to go
Under the obscure, cold, rotting, wormy ground!
To be nailed down into a narrow place;
To see no more sweet sunshine; hear no more
Blithe voice of living thing; muse not again
Upon familiar thoughts, sad, yet thus lost.
How fearful! to be nothing! Or to be—
What? O, where am I? Let me not go mad!
Sweet Heaven, forgive weak thoughts! If there should be
No God, no Heaven, no Earth in the void world;
The wide, grey, lampless, deep unpeopled world!
If all things then should be—my father's spirit
His eye, his voice, his touch surrounding me;
The atmosphere and breath of my dead life!
If sometimes, as a shape more like himself,
Even the form which tortured me on earth,
Mask'd in grey hairs and wrinkles, he should come
And wind me in his hellish arms, and fix
His eyes on mine, and drag me down, down, down!
For was he not alone omnipotent
On Earth, and ever present? even though dead,
Does not his spirit live in all that breathe,
And work for me and mine still the same ruin,
Scorn, pain, despair? Who ever yet return'd
To teach the laws of death's untrodden realm?
Unjust perhaps as those which drive us now,
O, whither, whither?

LUCRETIA.

Trust in God's sweet love,
The tender promises of Christ: ere night
Think we shall be in Paradise.

BEATRICE.

'T is past!
Whatever comes, my heart shall sink no more.
And yet, I know not why, your words strike chill:
How tedious, false and cold seem all things. I
Have met with much injustice in this world;
No difference has been made by God or man,
Or any power moulding my wretched lot,
'Twixt good or evil, as regarded me.
I am cut off from the only world I know,
From light, and life, and love, in youth's sweet prime.
You do well telling me to trust in God,
I hope I do trust in him. In whom else
Can any trust? And yet my heart is cold.

[*During the latter speeches* GIACOMO *has retired conversing with* CAMILLO, *who now goes out;* GIACOMO *advances.*

GIACOMO.

Know you not, Mother—Sister, know you not?
Bernardo even now is gone to implore
The Pope to grant our pardon.

LUCRETIA.

Child, perhaps
It will be granted. We may all then live
To make these woes a tale for distant years:
O, what a thought! It gushes to my heart
Like the warm blood.

BEATRICE.

Yet both will soon be cold,
O, trample out that thought! Worse than despair,
Worse than the bitterness of death, is hope:
It is the only ill which can find place
Upon the giddy, sharp and narrow hour
Tottering beneath us. Plead with the swift frost
That it should spare the eldest flower of spring:
Plead with awakening Earthquake, o'er whose couch
Even now a city stands, strong, fair, and free;
Now stench and blackness yawns, like death. O, plead
With famine, or wind-walking Pestilence,
Blind lightning, or the deaf sea, not with man!
Cruel, cold, formal man; righteous in words,
In deeds a Cain. No, Mother, we must die:
Since such is the reward of innocent lives;
Such the alleviation of worst wrongs.
And whilst our murderers live, and hard, cold men,
Smiling and slow, walk through a world of tears
To death as to life's sleep; 't were just the grave
Were some strange joy for us. Come, obscure Death,
And wind me in thine all-embracing arms!
Like a fond mother hide me in thy bosom,
And rock me to the sleep from which none wake.
Live ye, who live, subject to one another
As we were once, who now—

BERNARDO *rushes in.*

BERNARDO.

Oh, horrible!
That tears, that looks, that hope pour'd forth in prayer,
Even till the heart is vacant and despairs,
Should all be vain! The ministers of death
Are waiting round the doors. I thought I saw
Blood on the face of one—what if 't were fancy?
Soon the heart's blood of all I love on earth
Will sprinkle him, and he will wipe it off
As if 't were only rain. O, life! O, world!
Cover me! let me be no more! To see
That perfect mirror of pure innocence
Wherein I gazed, and grew happy and good,
Shiver'd to dust! To see thee, Beatrice,
Who made all lovely thou didst look upon—
Thee, light of life—dead, dark! while I say, sister,
To hear I have no sister; and thou, Mother,
Whose love was a bond to all our loves—
Dead! The sweet bond broken!

Enter CAMILLO *and Guards.*

They come! Let me
Kiss those warm lips before their crimson leaves
Are blighted—white—cold. Say farewell, before
Death chokes that gentle voice! O let me hear
You speak!

BEATRICE.

Farewell, my tender brother. Think
Of our sad fate with gentleness, as now:
And let mild, pitying thoughts lighten for thee
Thy sorrow's load. Err not in harsh despair,
But tears and patience. One thing more, my child,
For thine own sake be constant to the love
Thou bearest us; and to the faith that I,
Though wrapt in a strange cloud of crime and shame,
Lived ever holy and unstain'd. And though
Ill tongues shall wound me, and our common name
Be as a mark stamp'd on thine innocent brow
For men to point at as they pass, do thou
Forbear, and never think a thought unkind
Of those who perhaps love thee in their graves.
So mayest thou die as I do; fear and pain
Being subdued. Farewell! Farewell! Farewell!

BERNARDO.

I cannot say farewell!

CAMILLO.

O, Lady Beatrice!

BEATRICE.

Give yourself no unnecessary pain,
My dear Lord Cardinal. Here, Mother, tie
My girdle for me, and bind up this hair
In any simple knot; aye, that does well.
And yours I see is coming down. How often
Have we done this for one another! now
We shall not do it any more. My Lord,
We are quite ready. Well, 't is very well.

Prometheus Unbound;

A LYRICAL DRAMA IN FOUR ACTS.

Audisne hæc, Amphiarae, sub terram abdite?

PREFACE.

THE Greek tragic writers, in selecting as their subject any portion of their national history or mythology, employed in their treatment of it a certain arbitrary discretion. They by no means conceived themselves bound to adhere to the common interpretation, or to imitate in story as in title their rivals and predecessors. Such a system would have amounted to a resignation of those claims to preference over their competitors which incited the composition. The Agamemnonian story was exhibited on the Athenian theatre with as many variations as dramas.

I have presumed to employ a similar licence. The «Prometheus Unbound» of Æschylus supposed the reconciliation of Jupiter with his victim as the price of the disclosure of the danger threatened to his empire by the consummation of his marriage with Thetis. Thetis, according to this view of the subject, was given in marriage to Peleus, and Prometheus, by the permission of Jupiter, delivered from his captivity by Hercules. Had I framed my story on this model, I should have done no more than have attempted to restore the lost drama of Æschylus; an ambition, which, if my preference to this mode of treating the subject had incited me to cherish, the recollection of the high comparison such an attempt would challenge might well abate. But, in truth, I was averse from a catastrophe so feeble as that of reconciling the Champion with the Oppressor of mankind. The moral interest of the fable, which is so powerfully sustained by the sufferings and endurance of Prometheus, would be annihilated if we could conceive of him as unsaying his high language and quailing before his successful and perfidious adversary. The only imaginary being resembling in any degree Prometheus, is Satan; and Prometheus is, in my judgment, a more poetical character than Satan, because, in addition to courage, and majesty, and firm and patient opposition to omnipotent force, he is susceptible of being described as exempt from the taints of ambition, envy, revenge, and a desire for personal aggrandisement, which, in the Hero of Paradise Lost, interfere with the interest. The character of Satan engenders in the mind a pernicious casuistry which leads us to weigh his faults with his wrongs, and to excuse the former because the latter exceed all measure. In the minds of those who consider that magnificent fiction with a religious feeling, it engenders something worse. But Prometheus is, as it were, the type of the highest perfection of moral and intellectual nature, impelled by the purest and the truest motives to the best and noblest ends.

This Poem was chiefly written upon the mountainous ruins of the Baths of Caracalla, among the flowery glades, and thickets of odoriferous blossoming trees, which are extended in ever-winding labyrinths upon its immense platforms and dizzy arches suspended in the air. The bright blue sky of Rome, and the effect of the vigorous awakening spring in that divinest climate, and the new life with which it drenches the spirits even to intoxication, were the inspiration of this drama.

The imagery which I have employed will be found, in many instances, to have been drawn from the operations of the human mind, or from those external actions by which they are expressed. This is unusual in modern poetry, although Dante and Shakspeare are full of in-

stances of the same kind: Dante indeed more than any other poet, and with greater success. But the Greek poets, as writers to whom no resource of awakening the sympathy of their contemporaries was unknown, were in the habitual use of this power; and it is the study of their works (since a higher merit would probably be denied me), to which I am willing that my readers should impute this singularity.

One word is due in candour to the degree in which the study of contemporary writings may have tinged my composition, for such has been a topic of censure with regard to poems far more popular, and indeed more deservedly popular, than mine. It is impossible that any one who inhabits the same age with such writers as those who stand in the foremost ranks of our own, can conscientiously assure himself that his language and tone of thought may not have been modified by the study of the productions of those extraordinary intellects. It is true, that, not the spirit of their genius, but the forms in which it has manifested itself, are due less to the peculiarities of their own minds than to the peculiarity of the moral and intellectual condition of the minds among which they have been produced. Thus a number of writers possess the form, whilst they want the spirit of those whom, it is alleged, they imitate; because the former is the endowment of the age in which they live, and the latter must be the uncommunicated lightning of their own mind.

The peculiar style of intense and comprehensive imagery which distinguishes the modern literature of England, has not been, as a general power, the product of the imitation of any particular writer. The mass of capabilities remains at every period materially the same; the circumstances which awaken it to action perpetually change. If England were divided into forty republics, each equal in population and extent to Athens, there is no reason to suppose but that, under institutions not more perfect than those of Athens, each would produce philosophers and poets equal to those who (if we except Shakspeare) have never been surpassed. We owe the great writers of the golden age of our literature to that fervid awakening of the public mind which shook to dust the oldest and most oppressive form of the Christian religion. We owe Milton to the progress and development of the same spirit: the sacred Milton was, let it ever be remembered, a republican, and a bold inquirer into morals and religion. The great writers of our own age are, we have reason to suppose, the companions and forerunners of some unimagined change in our social condition or the opinions which cement it. The cloud of mind is discharging its collected lightning, and the equilibrium between institutions and opinions is now restoring, or is about to be restored.

As to imitation, poetry is a mimetic art. It creates, but it creates by combination and representation. Poetical abstractions are beautiful and new, not because the portions of which they are composed had no previous existence in the mind of man or in nature, but because the whole produced by their combination has some intelligible and beautiful analogy with those sources of emotion and thought, and with the contemporary condition of them: one great poet is a masterpiece of nature, which another not only ought to study but must study. He might as wisely and as easily determine that his mind should no longer be the mirror of all that is lovely in the visible universe, as exclude from his contemplation the beautiful which exists in the writings of a great contemporary. The pretence of doing it would be a presumption in any but the greatest; the effect, even in him, would be strained, unnatural, and ineffectual. A poet is the combined product of such internal powers as modify the nature of others; and of such external influences as excite and sustain these powers; he is not one, but both. Every man's mind is, in this respect, modified by all the objects of nature and art; by every word and every suggestion which he ever admitted to act upon his consciousness; it is the mirror upon which all forms are reflected, and in which they compose one form. Poets, not otherwise than philosophers, painters, sculptors, and musicians, are, in one sense, the creators, and, in another, the creations, of their age. From this subjection the loftiest do not escape. There is a similarity between Homer and Hesiod, between Æschylus and Euripides, between Virgil and Horace, between Dante and Petrarch, between Shakspeare and Fletcher, between Dryden and Pope; each has a generic resemblance under which their specific distinctions are arranged. If this similarity be the result of imitation, I am willing to confess that I have imitated.

Let this opportunity be conceded to me of acknowledging that I have, what a Scotch philosopher characteristically terms, « a passion for reforming the world: » what passion incited him to write and publish his book, he omits to explain. For my part I had rather be damned with Plato and Lord Bacon, than go to Heaven with Paley and Malthus. But it is a mistake to suppose that I dedicate my poetical compositions solely to the direct enforcement of reform, or that I consider them in any degree as containing a reasoned system on the theory of human life. Didactic poetry is my abhorrence; nothing can be equally well expressed in prose that is not tedious and supererogatory in verse. My purpose has hitherto been simply to familiarize the highly refined imagination of the more select classes of poetical readers with beautiful idealisms of moral excellence; aware that until the mind can love, and admire, and trust, and hope, and endure, reasoned principles of moral conduct are seeds cast upon the highway of life, which the unconscious passenger tramples into dust, although they would bear the harvest of his happiness. Should I live to accomplish what I purpose, that is, produce a systematical history of what appear to me to be the genuine elements of human society, let not the advocates of injustice and superstition flatter themselves that I should take Æschylus rather than Plato as my model.

The having spoken of myself with unaffected freedom will need little apology with the candid; and let the uncandid consider that they injure me less than their own hearts and minds by misrepresentation. Whatever talents a person may possess to amuse and instruct others, be they ever so inconsiderable, he is yet bound to exert them: if his attempt be ineffectual, let the punishment of an unaccomplished purpose have been sufficient; let none trouble themselves to heap the dust of oblivion upon his efforts; the pile they raise will betray his grave, which might otherwise have been unknown.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

PROMETHEUS.
DEMOGORGON.
JUPITER.
The EARTH.
OCEAN.
APOLLO.
MERCURY.
HERCULES.
ASIA, PANTHEA, IONE, *Oceanides.*
The PHANTASM OF JUPITER.
The SPIRIT OF THE EARTH.
SPIRITS OF THE HOURS.
SPIRITS. ECHOES. FAWNS.
FURIES.

PROMETHEUS UNBOUND.

ACT I.

SCENE, *a Ravine of Icy Rocks in the Indian Caucasus.* PROMETHEUS *is discovered bound to the Precipice.* PANTHEA *and* IONE *are seated at his feet. Time, Night. During the Scene, Morning slowly breaks.*

PROMETHEUS.

MONARCH of Gods and Dæmons, and all Spirits
But One, who throng those bright and rolling worlds
Which Thou and I alone of living things
Behold with sleepless eyes! regard this Earth,
Made multitudinous with thy slaves, whom thou
Requitest for knee-worship, prayer, and praise,
And toil, and hecatombs of broken hearts,
With fear and self-contempt and barren hope.
Whilst me, who am thy foe, eyeless in hate,
Hast thou made reign and triumph, to thy scorn,
O'er mine own misery and thy vain revenge.
Three thousand years of sleep-unsheltered hours,
And moments aye divided by keen pangs
Till they seemed years, torture and solitude,
Scorn and despair,—these are mine empire.
More glorious far than that which thou surveyest
From thine unenvied throne, O, Mighty God!
Almighty, had I deign'd to share the shame
Of thine ill tyranny, and hung not here
Nail'd to this wall of eagle-baffling mountain,
Black, wintry, dead, unmeasured; without herb,
Insect, or beast, or shape or sound of life.
Ah me, alas! pain, pain ever, for ever!

No change, no pause, no hope! Yet I endure.
I ask the Earth, have not the mountains felt?
I ask yon Heaven, the all-beholding Sun,
Has it not seen? The Sea, in storm or calm,
Heaven's ever-changing Shadow, spread below,
Have its deaf waves not heard my agony?
Ah me! alas, pain, pain ever, for ever!

The crawling glaciers pierce me with the spears
Of their moon-freezing crystals; the bright chains
Eat with their burning cold into my bones.
Heaven's winged hound, polluting from thy lips
His beak in poison not his own, tears up
My heart; and shapeless sights come wandering by,
The ghastly people of the realm of dream,
Mocking me: and the Earthquake-fiends are charged
To wrench the rivets from my quivering wounds
When the rocks split and close again behind:
While from their loud abysses howling throng
The genii of the storm, urging the rage
Of whirlwind, and afflict me with keen hail.
And yet to me welcome is day and night,
Whether one breaks the hoar frost of the morn,
Or starry, dim, and slow, the other climbs
The leaden-colour'd east; for then they lead
The wingless, crawling hours, one among whom
—As some dark Priest hales the reluctant victim—
Shall drag thee, cruel King, to kiss the blood
From these pale feet, which then might trample thee
If they disdain'd not such a prostrate slave.
Disdain! Ah no! I pity thee. What ruin
Will hunt thee undefended through the wide Heaven!
How will thy soul, cloven to its depth with terror,
Gape like a hell within! I speak in grief,
Not exultation, for I hate no more
As then, ere misery made me wise. The curse
Once breathed on thee I would recall. Ye Mountains,
Whose many-voiced Echoes, through the mist
Of cataracts, flung the thunder of that spell!
Ye icy Springs, stagnant with wrinkling frost,
Which vibrated to hear me, and then crept
Shuddering through India! Thou serenest Air,
Through which the Sun walks burning without beams!
And ye swift Whirlwinds, who on poised wings
Hung mute and moveless o'er yon hush'd abyss,
As thunder, louder than your own, made rock
The orbed world! If then my words had power,
Though I am changed so that aught evil wish
Is dead within; although no memory be
Of what is hate, let them not lose it now!
What was that curse? for ye all heard me speak.

FIRST VOICE: FROM THE MOUNTAINS.

Thrice three hundred thousand years
O'er the Earthquake's couch we stood:
Oft, as men convulsed with fears,
We trembled in our multitude.

SECOND VOICE: FROM THE SPRINGS.

Thunder-bolts had parch'd our water,
We had been stain'd with bitter blood,
And had run mute, 'mid shrieks of slaughter,
Through a city and a solitude.

THIRD VOICE: FROM THE AIR.

I had clothed, since Earth uprose,
Its wastes in colours not their own;
And oft had my serene repose
Been cloven by many a rending groan.

FOURTH VOICE: FROM THE WHIRLWINDS.

We had soar'd beneath these mountains
Unresting ages; nor had thunder,
Nor yon volcano's flaming fountains,
Nor any power above or under
Ever made us mute with wonder.

FIRST VOICE.

But never bowed our snowy crest
As at the voice of thine unrest.

SECOND VOICE.

Never such a sound before
To the Indian waves we bore.
A pilot asleep on the howling sea
Leap'd up from the deck in agony,
And heard, and cried, « Ah, woe is me!»
And died as mad as the wild waves be.

THIRD VOICE.

By such dread words from Earth to Heaven
My still realm was never riven:
When its wound was closed, there stood
Darkness o'er the day like blood.

FOURTH VOICE.

And we shrank back: for dreams of ruin
To frozen caves our flight pursuing
Made us keep silence—thus—and thus—
Though silence is a hell to us.

THE EARTH.

The tongueless Caverns of the craggy hills
Cried, « Misery!» then; the hollow Heaven replied,
« Misery!» And the Ocean's purple waves,
Climbing the land, howled to the lashing winds,
And the pale nations heard it, « Misery!»

PROMETHEUS.

I hear a sound of voices: not the voice
Which I gave forth. Mother, thy sons and thou
Scorn him, without whose all-enduring will
Beneath the fierce omnipotence of Jove,
Both they and thou had vanish'd, like thin mist
Unroll'd on the morning wind. Know ye not me,
The Titan? He who made his agony
The barrier to your else all-conquering foe?
Oh, rock-embosom'd lawns, and snow-fed streams,
Now seen athwart frore vapours, deep below,
Through whose o'ershadowing woods I wander'd once
With Asia, drinking life from her loved eyes;
Why scorns the spirit which informs ye, now
To commune with me? me alone, who check'd,
As one who checks a fiend-drawn charioteer,
The falsehood and the force of him who reigns
Supreme, and with the groans of pining slaves
Fills your dim glens and liquid wildernesses:
Why answer ye not, still? Brethren!

THE EARTH.

They dare not.

PROMETHEUS.

Who dares? for I would hear that curse again.
Ha! what an awful whisper rises up!
'T is scarce like sound: it tingles through the frame
As lightning tingles, hovering ere it strike.
Speak, Spirit! from thine inorganic voice
I only know that thou art moving near
And love. How cursed I him?

THE EARTH.

How canst thou hear,
Who knowest not the language of the dead?

PROMETHEUS.

Thou art a living spirit; speak as they.

THE EARTH.

I dare not speak like life, lest Heaven's fell King
Should hear, and link me to some wheel of pain
More torturing than the one whereon I roll.
Subtle thou art and good; and though the Gods
Hear not this voice, yet thou art more than God
Being wise and kind: earnestly hearken now.

PROMETHEUS.

Obscurely through my brain, like shadows dim,
Sweep awful thoughts, rapid and thick. I feel
Faint, like one mingled in entwining love;
Yet 't is not pleasure.

THE EARTH.

No, thou canst not hear:
Thou art immortal, and this tongue is known
Only to those who die.

PROMETHEUS.

And what art thou,
O, melancholy Voice?

THE EARTH.

I am the Earth,
Thy mother; she within whose stony veins,
To the last fibre of the loftiest tree
Whose thin leaves trembled in the frozen air,
Joy ran, as blood within a living frame,
When thou didst from her bosom, like a cloud
Of glory, arise, a spirit of keen joy!
And at thy voice her pining sons uplifted
Their prostrate brows from the polluting dust,
And our almighty Tyrant with fierce dread
Grew pale, until his thunder chain'd thee here.
Then, see those million worlds which burn and roll
Around us: their inhabitants beheld
My sphered light wane in wide Heaven; the sea
Was lifted by strange tempest, and new fire
From earthquake-rifted mountains of bright snow
Shook its portentous hair beneath Heaven's frown;
Lightning and Inundation vexed the plains;
Blue thistles bloom'd in cities; foodless toads
Within voluptuous chambers panting crawl'd;
When Plague had fallen on man, and beast, and worm,
And Famine; and black blight on herb and tree;
And in the corn, and vines, and meadow-grass,
Teemed ineradicable poisonous weeds
Draining their growth, for my wan breast was dry
With grief; and the thin air, my breath, was stain'd
With the contagion of a mother's hate
Breathed on her child's destroyer; aye, I heard
Thy curse, the which, if thou rememberest not,
Yet my innumerable seas and streams,
Mountains, and caves, and winds, and yon wide air,
And the inarticulate people of the dead,
Preserve, a treasured spell. We meditate
In secret joy and hope those dreadful words
But dare not speak them.

PROMETHEUS.

Venerable mother!
All else who live and suffer take from thee
Some comfort; flowers, and fruits, and happy sounds,
And love, though fleeting; these may not be mine.
But mine own words, I pray, deny me not.

THE EARTH.

They shall be told. Ere Babylon was dust,
The Magus Zoroaster, my dead child,
Met his own image walking in the garden.
That apparition, sole of men, he saw.

For know there are two worlds of life and death:
One that which thou beholdest; but the other
Is underneath the grave, where do inhabit
The shadows of all forms that think and live
Till death unite them and they part no more;
Dreams and the light imaginings of men,
And all that faith creates or love desires,
Terrible, strange, sublime and beauteous shapes.
There thou art, and dost hang, a writhing shade,
'Mid whirlwind-peopled mountains; all the gods
Are there, and all the powers of nameless worlds,
Vast, sceptred phantoms; heroes, men, and beasts;
And Demogorgon, a tremendous gloom;
And he, the supreme Tyrant, on his throne
Of burning gold. Son, one of these shall utter
The curse which all remember. Call at will
Thine own ghost, or the ghost of Jupiter,
Hades or Typhon, or what mightier Gods
From all-prolific Evil, since thy ruin
Have sprung, and trampled on my prostrate sons.
Ask, and they must reply: so the revenge
Of the Supreme may sweep through vacant shades,
As rainy wind through the abandoned gate
Of a fallen palace.

PROMETHEUS.

Mother, let not aught
Of that which may be evil, pass again
My lips, or those of aught resembling me.
Phantasm of Jupiter, arise, appear!

IONE.

My wings are folded o'er mine ears:
My wings are crossed o'er mine eyes:
Yet through their silver shade appears,
And through their lulling plumes arise,
A Shape, a throng of sounds;
May it be no ill to thee
O thou of many wounds?
Near whom, for our sweet sister's sake,
Ever thus we watch and wake.

PANTHEA.

The sound is of whirlwind underground,
Earthquake, and fire, and mountains cloven;
The shape is awful like the sound,
Clothed in dark purple, star-inwoven.
A sceptre of pale gold
To stay steps proud, o'er the slow cloud
His veined hand doth hold.
Cruel he looks, but calm and strong,
Like one who does, not suffers wrong.

PHANTASM OF JUPITER.

Why have the secret powers of this strange world
Driven me, a frail and empty phantom, hither
On direst storms? What unaccustom'd sounds
Are hovering on my lips, unlike the voice
With which our pallid race hold ghastly talk
In darkness? And, proud sufferer, who art thou?

PROMETHEUS.

Tremendous Image! as thou art must be
He whom thou shadowest forth. I am his foe,
The Titan. Speak the words which I would hear,
Although no thought inform thine empty voice.

THE EARTH.

Listen! And though your echoes must be mute,
Grey mountains, and old woods, and haunted springs,
Prophetic caves, and isle-surrounding streams,
Rejoice to hear what yet ye cannot speak.

PHANTASM.

A spirit seizes me and speaks within:
It tears me as fire tears a thunder-cloud.

PANTHEA.

See, how he lifts his mighty looks, the Heaven
Darkens above.

IONE.

He speaks! O shelter me!

PROMETHEUS.

I see the curse on gestures proud and cold,
And looks of firm defiance, and calm hate,
And such despair as mocks itself with smiles,
Written as on a scroll: yet speak: Oh, speak!

PHANTASM.

Fiend, I defy thee! with a calm, fixed mind,
All that thou canst inflict I bid thee do;
Foul Tyrant both of Gods and Human-kind,
One only being shalt thou not subdue.
Rain then thy plagues upon me here,
Ghastly disease, and frenzying fear;
And let alternate frost and fire
Eat into me, and be thine ire
Lightning, and cutting hail, and legion'd forms
Of furies, driving by upon the wounding storms.

Aye, do thy worst. Thou art omnipotent.
O'er all things but thyself I gave thee power,
And my own will. Be thy swift mischiefs sent
To blast mankind, from yon ethereal tower.
Let thy malignant spirit move
In darkness over those I love:
On me and mine I imprecate.
The utmost torture of thy hate;
And thus devote to sleepless agony,
This undeclining head while thou must reign on high.

But thou, who art the God and Lord: O, thou,
Who fillest with thy soul this world of woe,
To whom all things of Earth and Heaven do bow
In fear and worship: all-prevailing foe!
I curse thee! let a sufferer's curse
Clasp thee, his torturer, like remorse;
Till thine Infinity shall be
A robe of envenom'd agony;
And thine Omnipotence a crown of pain,
To cling like burning gold round thy dissolving brain

Heap on thy soul, by virtue of this Curse,
Ill deeds, then be thou damned, beholding good;
Both infinite as is the universe,
And thou, and thy self-torturing solitude.
An awful image of calm power
Though now thou sittest, let the hour
Come, when thou must appear to be
That which thou art internally.
And after many a false and fruitless crime,
Scorn track thy lagging fall through boundless space and time.

PROMETHEUS.

Were these my words, O Parent?

THE EARTH.

They were thine.

PROMETHEUS.

It doth repent me: words are quick and vain:
Grief for awhile is blind, and so was mine.
I wish no living thing to suffer pain.

THE EARTH.

Misery, Oh misery to me,
That Jove at length should vanquish thee.
Wail, howl aloud, Land and Sea,
The Earth's rent heart shall answer ye.
Howl, Spirits of the living and the dead,
Your refuge, your defence lies fallen and vanquished.

FIRST ECHO.

Lies fallen and vanquished!

SECOND ECHO.

Fallen and vanquished!

IONE.

Fear not: 't is but some passing spasm,
The Titan is unvanquished still.
But see, where through the azure chasm
Of yon forked and snowy hill
Trampling the slant winds on high
With golden-sandall'd feet, that glow
Under plumes of purple dye,
Like rose-ensanguined ivory,
A Shape comes now,
Stretching on high from his right hand
A serpent-cinctured wand.

PANTHEA.

'T is Jove's world-wandering herald, Mercury.

IONE.

And who are those with hydra tresses
And iron wings that climb the wind,
Whom the frowning God represses
Like vapours steaming up behind,
Clanging loud, an endless crowd—

PANTHEA.

These are Jove's tempest-walking hounds,
Whom he gluts with groans and blood,
When charioted on sulphurous cloud
He bursts Heaven's bounds.

IONE.

Are they now led, from the thin dead
On new pangs to be fed?

PANTHEA.

The Titan looks as ever, firm, not proud.

FIRST FURY.

Ha! I scent life!

SECOND FURY.

Let me but look into his eyes!

THIRD FURY.

The hope of torturing him smells like a heap
Of corpses, to a death-bird after battle.

FIRST FURY.

Darest thou delay, O Herald! take cheer, Hounds
Of Hell: what if the Son of Maia soon
Should make us food and sport—who can please long
The Omnipotent?

MERCURY.

Back to your towers of iron,
And gnash beside the streams of fire, and wail
Your foodless teeth. Geryon, arise! and Gorgon,
Chimæra, and thou Sphinx, subtlest of fiends,
Who ministered to Thebes Heaven's poison'd wine,
Unnatural love, and more unnatural hate:
These shall perform your task.

FIRST FURY.

Oh, mercy! mercy!
We die with our desire: drive us not back!

MERCURY.

Crouch then in silence.
Awful Sufferer!
To thee unwilling, most unwillingly
I come, by the great Father's will driven down,
To execute a doom of new revenge.
Alas! I pity thee, and hate myself
That I can do no more: aye from thy sight
Returning, for a season, heaven seems hell,
So thy worn form pursues me night and day,
Smiling reproach. Wise art thou, firm and good,
But vainly wouldst stand forth alone in strife
Against the Omnipotent; as yon clear lamps
That measure and divide the weary years
From which there is no refuge, long have taught
And long must teach. Even now thy Torturer arms
With the strange might of unimagined pains
The powers who scheme slow agonies in Hell,
And my commission is to lead them here,
Or what more subtle, foul, or savage fiends
People the abyss, and leave them to their task.
Be it not so! there is a secret known
To thee, and to none else of living things,
Which may transfer the sceptre of wide Heaven,
The fear of which perplexes the Supreme:
Clothe it in words, and bid it clasp his throne
In intercession; bend thy soul in prayer,
And like a suppliant in some gorgeous fane,
Let the will kneel within thy haughty heart:
For benefits and meek submission tame
The fiercest and the mightiest.

PROMETHEUS.

Evil minds
Change good to their own nature. I gave all
He has; and in return he chains me here
Years, ages, night and day: whether the Sun
Split my parched skin, or in the moony night
The crystal-winged snow cling round my hair:
Whilst my beloved race is trampled down
By his thought-executing ministers.
Such is the tyrants' recompense: 't is just:
He who is evil can receive no good;
And for a world bestowed, or a friend lost,
He can feel hate, fear, shame; not gratitude:
He but requites me for his own misdeed.
Kindness to such is keen reproach, which breaks
With bitter stings the light sleep of Revenge.
Submission, thou dost know I cannot try:
For what submission but that fatal word,
The death-seal of mankind's captivity,
Like the Sicilian's hair-suspended sword,
Which trembles o'er his crown, would he accept,

Or could I yield? Which yet I will not yield.
Let others flatter Crime, where it sits throned
In brief Omnipotence: secure are they:
For Justice, when triumphant, will weep down
Pity, not punishment, on her own wrongs,
Too much avenged by those who err. I wait,
Enduring thus, the retributive hour
Which since we spake is even nearer now.
But hark, the hell-hounds clamour: fear delay:
Behold! Heaven lowers under thy Father's frown.

MERCURY.

Oh, that we might be spared: I to inflict,
And thou to suffer! Once more answer me:
Thou knowest not the period of Jove's power?

PROMETHEUS.

I know but this, that it must come.

MERCURY.

Alas:
Thou canst not count thy years to come of pain?

PROMETHEUS.

They last while Jove must reign: nor more, nor less
Do I desire or fear.

MERCURY.

Yet pause, and plunge
Into Eternity, where recorded time,
Even all that we imagine, age on age,
Seems but a point, and the reluctant mind
Flags wearily in its unending flight,
Till it sink, dizzy, blind, lost, shelterless;
Perchance it has not number'd the slow years
Which thou must spend in torture, unreprieved?

PROMETHEUS.

Perchance no thought can count them, yet they pass.

MERCURY.

If thou might'st dwell among the Gods the while,
Lapp'd in voluptuous joy?

PROMETHEUS.

I would not quit
This bleak ravine, these unrepentant pains.

MERCURY.

Alas! I wonder at, yet pity thee.

PROMETHEUS.

Pity the self-despising slaves of Heaven,
Not me, within whose mind sits peace serene,
As light in the sun, throned: how vain is talk!
Call up the fiends.

IONE.

O, sister, look! White fire
Has cloven to the roots yon huge snow-loaded cedar;
How fearfully God's thunder howls behind!

MERCURY.

I must obey his words and thine: alas!
Most heavily remorse hangs at my heart!

PANTHEA.

See where the child of Heaven, with winged feet,
Runs down the slanted sunlight of the dawn.

IONE.

Dear sister, close thy plumes over thine eyes
Lest thou behold and die: they come: they come
Blackening the birth of day with countless wings,
And hollow underneath, like death.

FIRST FURY.

Prometheus!

SECOND FURY.

Immortal Titan!

THIRD FURY.

Champion of Heaven's slaves!

PROMETHEUS.

He whom some dreadful voice invokes is here,
Prometheus, the chain'd Titan. Horrible forms,
What and who are ye? Never yet there came
Phantasms so foul through monster-teeming Hell
From the all-miscreative brain of Jove;
Whilst I behold such execrable shapes,
Methinks I grow like what I contemplate,
And laugh and stare in loathsome sympathy.

FIRST FURY.

We are the ministers of pain, and fear,
And disappointment, and mistrust, and hate,
And clinging crime; and as lean dogs pursue
Through wood and lake some struck and sobbing fawn,
We track all things that weep, and bleed, and live,
When the great King betrays them to our will.

PROMETHEUS.

Oh! many fearful natures in one name,
I know ye; and these lakes and echoes know
The darkness and the clangour of your wings.
But why more hideous than your loathed selves
Gather ye up in legions from the deep?

SECOND FURY.

We knew not that: Sisters, rejoice, rejoice!

PROMETHEUS.

Can aught exult in its deformity?

SECOND FURY.

The beauty of delight makes lovers glad,
Gazing on one another: so are we.
As from the rose which the pale priestess kneels
To gather for her festal crown of flowers
The aerial crimson falls, flushing her cheek,
So from our victim's destined agony
The shade which is our form invests us round,
Else we are shapeless as our mother Night.

PROMETHEUS.

I laugh your power, and his who sent you here,
To lowest scorn. Pour forth the cup of pain.

FIRST FURY.

Thou thinkest we will rend thee bone from bone,
And nerve from nerve, working like fire within?

PROMETHEUS.

Pain is my element, as hate is thine;
Ye rend me now: I care not.

SECOND FURY.

Dost imagine
We will but laugh into thy lidless eyes?

PROMETHEUS.

I weigh not what ye do, but what ye suffer,
Being evil. Cruel was the power which called
You, or aught else so wretched, into light.

THIRD FURY.

Thou think'st we will live through thee, one by one,
Like animal life, and though we can obscure not
The soul which burns within, that we will dwell
Beside it, like a vain loud multitude
Vexing the self-content of wisest men:
That we will be dread thought beneath thy brain,
And foul desire round thine astonish'd heart,
And blood within thy labyrinthine veins
Crawling like agony.

PROMETHEUS.

Why, ye are thus now;
Yet am I king over myself, and rule

The torturing and conflicting throngs within,
As Jove rules you when Hell grows mutinous.

CHORUS OF FURIES.

From the ends of the earth, from the ends of the earth,
Where the night has its grave and the morning its birth,
Come, come, come!
Oh, ye who shake hills with the scream of your mirth,
When cities sink howling in ruin; and ye
Who with wingless footsteps trample the sea,
And close upon Shipwreck and Famine's track,
Sit chattering with joy on the foodless wreck:
Come, come, come!
Leave the bed, low, cold, and red,
Strew'd beneath a nation dead;
Leave the hatred, as in ashes
Fire is left for future burning:
It will burst in bloodier flashes
When ye stir it, soon returning:
Leave the self-contempt implanted
In young spirits, sense-enchanted,
Misery's yet unkindled fuel:
Leave Hell's secrets half unchanted,
To the maniac dreamer; cruel
More than ye can be with hate
Is he with fear.
Come, come, come!
We are steaming up from Hell's wide gate,
And we burthen the blasts of the atmosphere,
But vainly we toil till ye come here.

IONE.

Sister, I hear the thunder of new wings.

PANTHEA.

These solid mountains quiver with the sound
Even as the tremulous air: their shadows make
The space within my plumes more black than night.

FIRST FURY.

Your call was as a winged car,
Driven on whirlwinds fast and far;
It rapt us from red gulfs of war.

SECOND FURY.

From wide cities, famine-wasted;

THIRD FURY.

Groans half heard, and blood untasted;

FOURTH FURY.

Kingly conclaves, stern and cold,
Where blood with gold is bought and sold;

FIFTH FURY.

From the furnace, white and hot,
In which—

A FURY.

Speak not; whisper not:
I know all that ye would tell,
But to speak might break the spell
Which must bend the Invincible,
The stern of thought;
He yet defies the deepest power of Hell.

FURY.

Tear the veil!

ANOTHER FURY.

It is torn.

CHORUS.

The pale stars of the morn
Shine on a misery dire to be borne.
Dost thou faint, mighty Titan? We laugh thee to scorn.
Dost thou boast the clear knowledge thou waken'dst for man?
Then was kindled within him a thirst which outran
Those perishing waters; a thirst of fierce fever,
Hope, love, doubt, desire, which consume him for ever.
One came forth of gentle worth,
Smiling on the sanguine earth;
His words outlived him, like swift poison
Withering up truth, peace, and pity.
Look! where round the wide horizon
Many a million-peopled city
Vomits smoke in the bright air.
Mark that outcry of despair!
'T is his mild and gentle ghost
Wailing for the faith he kindled:
Look again! the flames almost
To a glow-worm's lamp have dwindled:
The survivors round the embers
Gather in dread.
Joy, joy, joy!
Past ages crowd on thee, but each one remembers;
And the future is dark, and the present is spread
Like a pillow of thorns for thy slumberless head.

SEMICHORUS I.

Drops of bloody agony flow
From his white and quivering brow.
Grant a little respite now:
See! a disenchanted nation
Springs like day from desolation;
To Truth its state is dedicate,
And Freedom leads it forth, her mate;
A legion'd band of linked brothers,
Whom Love calls children—

SEMICHORUS II.

'T is another's:
See how kindred murder kin!
'T is the vintage-time for death and sin.
Blood, like new wine, bubbles within:
Till Despair smothers
The struggling world, which slaves and tyrants win.
[*All the* FURIES *vanish, except one.*

IONE.

Hark, sister! what a low yet dreadful groan
Quite unsuppress'd is tearing up the heart
Of the good Titan, as storms tear the deep,
And beasts hear the sea moan in inland caves.
Darest thou observe how the fiends torture him?

PANTHEA.

Alas! I look'd forth twice, but will no more.

IONE.

What didst thou see?

PANTHEA.

A woful sight: a youth
With patient looks nail'd to a crucifix.

IONE.

What next?

PANTHEA.

The heaven around, the earth below
Was peopled with thick shapes of human death,
All horrible, and wrought by human hands,
And some appear'd the work of human hearts,
For men were slowly kill'd by frowns and smiles:
And other sights too foul to speak and live
Were wandering by. Let us not tempt worse fear
By looking forth: those groans are grief enough.

FURY.

Behold an emblem: those who do endure
Deep wrongs for man, and scorn, and chains, but heap
Thousandfold torment on themselves and him.

PROMETHEUS.

Remit the anguish of that lighted stare;
Close those wan lips; let that thorn-wounded brow
Stream not with blood; it mingles with thy tears!
Fix, fix those tortured orbs in peace and death,
So thy sick throes shake not that crucifix,
So those pale fingers play not with thy gore.
O, horrible! Thy name I will not speak,
It hath become a curse. I see, I see
The wise, the mild, the lofty, and the just,
Whom thy slaves hate for being like to thee,
Some hunted by foul lies from their heart's home,
An early-chosen, late-lamented home;
As hooded ounces cling to the driven hind;
Some link'd to corpses in unwholesome cells:
Some—Hear I not the multitude laugh loud?—
Impaled in lingering fire: and mighty realms
Float by my feet, like sea-uprooted isles,
Whose sons are kneaded down in common blood
By the red light of their own burning homes.

FURY.

Blood thou canst see, and fire; and canst hear groans:
Worse things unheard, unseen, remain behind.

PROMETHEUS.

Worse?

FURY.

In each human heart terror survives
The ruin it has gorged: the loftiest fear
All that they would disdain to think were true:
Hypocrisy and custom make their minds
The fanes of many a worship, now outworn.
They dare not devise good for man's estate,
And yet they know not that they do not dare.
The good want power, but to weep barren tears.
The powerful goodness want: worse need for them.
The wise want love; and those who love want wisdom;
And all best things are thus confused to ill.
Many are strong and rich, and would be just,
But live among their suffering fellow-men
As if none felt: they know not what they do.

PROMETHEUS.

Thy words are like a cloud of winged snakes;
And yet I pity those they torture not.

FURY.

Thou pitiest them? I speak no more! [*Vanishes.*

PROMETHEUS.

Ah woe!
Ah woe! Alas! pain, pain ever, for ever!
I close my tearless eyes, but see more clear
Thy works within my woe-illumined mind,
Thou subtle tyrant! Peace is in the grave.
The grave hides all things beautiful and good:
I am a God and cannot find it there,
Nor would I seek it: for, though dread revenge,
This is defeat, fierce king! not victory.
The sights with which thou torturest gird my soul
With new endurance, till the hour arrives
When they shall be no types of things which are.

PANTHEA.

Alas! what sawest thou?

PROMETHEUS.

There are two woes;
To speak and to behold; thou spare me one.
Names are there, Nature's sacred watch-words, they
Were borne aloft in bright emblazonry;
The nations throng'd around, and cried aloud,
As with one voice, Truth, liberty, and love!
Suddenly fierce confusion fell from heaven
Among them: there was strife, deceit, and fear:
Tyrants rush'd in, and did divide the spoil.
This was the shadow of the truth I saw.

THE EARTH.

I felt thy torture, son, with such mix'd joy
As pain and virtue give. To cheer thy state
I bid ascend those subtle and fair spirits,
Whose homes are the dim caves of human thought,
And who inhabit, as birds wing the wind,
Its world-surrounding ether: they behold
Beyond that twilight realm, as in a glass,
The future: may they speak comfort to thee!

PANTHEA.

Look, sister, where a troop of spirits gather,
Like flocks of clouds in spring's delightful weather,
Thronging in the blue air!

IONE.

And see! more come,
Like fountain vapours when the winds are dumb,
That climb up the ravine in scatter'd lines.
And, hark? is it the music of the pines?
Is it the lake? Is it the waterfall?

PANTHEA.

'T is something sadder, sweeter far than all.

CHORUS OF SPIRITS.

From unremember'd ages we
Gentle guides and guardians be
Of heaven-oppress'd mortality;
And we breathe, and sicken not,
The atmosphere of human thought:
Be it dim, and dank, and grey,
Like a storm-extinguish'd day,
Travell'd o'er by dying gleams;
Be it bright as all between
Cloudless skies and windless streams,
Silent, liquid, and serene;
As the birds within the wind,
As the fish within the wave,
As the thoughts of man's own mind
Float through all above the grave;
We make these our liquid lair,
Voyaging cloudlike and unpent
Through the boundless element:
Thence we bear the prophecy
Which begins and ends in thee!

IONE.

More yet come, one by one: the air around them
Looks radiant as the air around a star.

FIRST SPIRIT.

On a battle-trumpet's blast
I fled hither, fast, fast, fast,
'Mid the darkness upward cast.
From the dust of creeds outworn,
From the tyrant's banner torn,
Gathering round me, onward borne,
There was mingled many a cry—
Freedom! Hope! Death! Victory!
Till they faded through the sky;
And one sound above, around,
One sound beneath, around, above,
Was moving; 't was the soul of love;
'T was the hope, the prophecy,
Which begins and ends in thee.

SECOND SPIRIT.

A rainbow's arch stood on the sea,
Which rock'd beneath, immoveably;
And the triumphant storm did flee,
Like a conqueror, swift and proud,
Between with many a captive cloud
A shapeless, dark and rapid crowd,
Each by lightning riven in half:
I heard the thunder hoarsely laugh:
Mighty fleets were strewn like chaff
And spread beneath a hell of death
O'er the white waters. I alit
On a great ship lightning-split,
And speeded hither on the sigh
Of one who gave an enemy
His plank, then plunged aside to die.

THIRD SPIRIT.

I sate beside a sage's bed,
And the lamp was burning red
Near the book where he had fed,
When a Dream with plumes of flame,
To his pillow hovering came,
And I knew it was the same
Which had kindled long ago
Pity, eloquence, and woe;
And the world awhile below
Wore the shade its lustre made.
It has borne me here as fleet
As Desire's lightning feet:
I must ride it back ere morrow,
Or the sage will wake in sorrow.

FOURTH SPIRIT.

On a poet's lips I slept
Dreaming like a love-adept
In the sound his breathing kept;
Nor seeks nor finds he mortal blisses,
But feeds on the aërial kisses
Of shapes that haunt thought's wildernesses.
He will watch from dawn to gloom
The lake-reflected sun illume
The yellow bees in the ivy-bloom,
Nor heed nor see, what things they be;
But from these create he can
Forms more real than living man,
Nurslings of immortality!
One of these awaken'd me,
And I sped to succour thee.

IONE.

Behold'st thou not two shapes from the east and west
Come, as two doves to one beloved nest,
Twin nurslings of the all-sustaining air
On swift still wings glide down the atmosphere?
And, hark! their sweet, sad voices! 't is despair
Mingled with love and then dissolved in sound.

PANTHEA.

Canst thou speak, sister? all my words are drown'd.

IONE.

Their beauty gives me voice. See how they float
On their sustaining wings of skiey grain,
Orange and azure deepening into gold:
Their soft smiles light the air like a star's fire.

CHORUS OF SPIRITS.

Hast thou beheld the form of Love?

FIFTH SPIRIT.

As over wide dominions
I sped, like some swift cloud that wings the wide air's wildernesses,
That planet-crested shape swept by on lightning-braided pinions,
Scattering the liquid joy of life from his ambrosial tresses:
His footsteps paved the world with light; but as I pass'd 't was fading,
And hollow Ruin yawn'd behind: great sages bound in madness,
And headless patriots, and pale youths who perish'd, unupbraiding,
Gleam'd in the night. I wander'd o'er, till thou, O King of sadness,
Turn'd by thy smile the worst I saw to recollected gladness.

SIXTH SPIRIT.

Ah, sister! Desolation is a delicate thing:
It walks not on the earth, it floats not on the air,
But treads with silent footstep, and fans with silent wing
The tender hopes which in their hearts the best and gentlest bear;
Who, soothed to false repose by the fanning plumes above,
And the music-stirring motion of its soft and busy feet,
Dream visions of aërial joy, and call the monster, Love,
And wake, and find the shadow Pain, as he whom now we greet.

CHORUS.

Though Ruin now Love's shadow be,
Following him, destroyingly,
On Death's white and winged steed,
Which the fleetest cannot flee,
Trampling down both flower and weed,
Man and beast, and foul and fair,
Like a tempest through the air;
Thou shalt quell this horseman grim,
Woundless though in heart or limb.

PROMETHEUS.

Spirits! how know ye this shall be?

CHORUS.

In the atmosphere we breathe,
As buds grow red when the snow-storms flee,

From spring gathering up beneath,
Whose mild winds shake the elder brake,
And the wandering herdsmen know
That the white-thorn soon will blow:
Wisdom, Justice, Love, and Peace,
When they struggle to increase,
Are to us as soft winds be
To shepherd boys, the prophecy
Which begins and ends in thee.

IONE.

Where are the spirits fled?

PANTHEA.

Only a sense
Remains of them, like the omnipotence
Of music, when the inspired voice and lute
Languish, ere yet the responses are mute,
Which through the deep and labyrinthine soul,
Like echoes through long caverns, wind and roll.

PROMETHEUS.

How fair these air-born shapes! and yet I feel
Most vain all hope but love; and thou art far,
Asia! who, when my being overflow'd,
Wert like a golden chalice to bright wine
Which else had sunk into the thirsty dust.
All things are still: alas! how heavily
This quiet morning weighs upon my heart;
Though I should dream I could even sleep with grief,
If slumber were denied not. I would fain
Be what it is my destiny to be,
The saviour and the strength of suffering man,
Or sink into the original gulf of things:
There is no agony, and no solace left;
Earth can console, Heaven can torment no more.

PANTHEA.

Hast thou forgotten one who watches thee
The cold dark night, and never sleeps but when
The shadow of thy spirit falls on her?

PROMETHEUS.

I said all hope was vain but love: thou lovest.

PANTHEA.

Deeply, in truth; but the eastern star looks white,
And Asia waits in that far Indian vale
The scene of her sad exile; rugged once
And desolate and frozen, like this ravine;
But now invested with fair flowers and herbs,
And haunted by sweet airs and sounds, which flow
Among the woods and waters, from the ether
Of her transforming presence, which would fade
If it were mingled not with thine. Farewell!

ACT II.

SCENE I.

Morning. A lovely Vale in the Indian Caucasus.

ASIA, *alone.*

ASIA.

From all the blasts of heaven thou hast descended:
Yes, like a spirit, like a thought, which makes
Unwonted tears throng to the horny eyes,
And beatings haunt the desolated heart,
Which should have learnt repose: thou hast descended
Cradled in tempests; thou dost wake, O Spring!
O child of many winds! As suddenly
Thou comest as the memory of a dream,
Which now is sad because it hath been sweet;
Like genius, or like joy which riseth up
As from the earth, clothing with golden clouds
The desert of our life.
This is the season, this the day, the hour;
At sunrise thou shouldst come, sweet sister mine,
Too long desired, too long delaying, come!
How like death-worms the wingless moments crawl!
The point of one white star is quivering still
Deep in the orange light of widening morn
Beyond the purple mountains: through a chasm
Of wind-divided mist the darker lake
Reflects it: now it wanes: it gleams again
As the waves fade, and as the burning threads
Of woven cloud unravel in pale air:
'T is lost! and through yon peaks of cloudlike snow
The roseate sun-light quivers: hear I not
The Æolian music of her sea-green plumes
Winnowing the crimson dawn?

PANTHEA *enters.*

I feel, I see
Those eyes which burn through smiles that fade in tears,
Like stars half quench'd in mists of silver dew.
Beloved and most beautiful, who wearest
The shadow of that soul by which I live,
How late thou art! the sphered sun had climb'd
The sea; my heart was sick with hope, before
The printless air felt thy belated plumes.

PANTHEA.

Pardon, great Sister! but my wings were faint
With the delight of a remember'd dream,
As are the noon-tide plumes of summer winds
Satiate with sweet flowers. I was wont to sleep
Peacefully, and awake refresh'd and calm
Before the sacred Titan's fall, and thy
Unhappy love, had made, through use and pity,
Both love and woe familiar to my heart
As they had grown to thine: erewhile I slept
Under the glaucous caverns of old Ocean
Within dim bowers of green and purple moss,
Our young Ione's soft and milky arms
Lock'd then, as now, behind my dark, moist hair,
While my shut eyes and cheek were press'd within
The folded depth of her life-breathing bosom:
But not as now, since I am made the wind
Which fails beneath the music that I bear
Of thy most wordless converse; since dissolved
Into the sense with which love talks, my rest
Was troubled and yet sweet; my waking hours
Too full of care and pain.

ASIA.

Lift up thine eyes,
And let me read thy dream.

PANTHEA.

As I have said
With our sea-sister at his feet I slept.
The mountain mists, condensing at our voice
Under the moon, had spread their snowy flakes,
From the keen ice shielding our linked sleep.
Then two dreams came. One, I remember not.
But in the other his pale wound-worn limbs

Fell from Prometheus, and the azure night
Grew radiant with the glory of that form
Which lives unchanged within, and his voice fell
Like music which makes giddy the dim brain,
Faint with intoxication of keen joy:
« Sister of her whose footsteps pave the world
With loveliness—more fair than aught but her,
Whose shadow thou art—lift thine eyes on me.»
I lifted them: the overpowering light
Of that immortal shape was shadowed o'er
By love; which, from his soft and flowing limbs,
And passion-parted lips, and keen, faint eyes,
Steam'd forth like vaporous fire; an atmosphere
Which wrapt me in its all-dissolving power,
As the warm ether of the morning sun
Wraps ere it drinks some cloud of wandering dew.
I saw not, heard not, moved not, only felt
His presence flow and mingle through my blood
Till it became his life, and his grew mine,
And I was thus absorb'd, until it past,
And like the vapours when the sun sinks down,
Gathering again in drops upon the pines,
And tremulous as they, in the deep night
My being was condensed; and as the rays
Of thought were slowly gather'd, I could hear
His voice, whose accents linger'd ere they died
Like footsteps of weak melody: thy name
Among the many sounds alone I heard
Of what might be articulate; though still
I listen'd through the night when sound was none.
Ione waken'd then, and said to me:
« Canst thou divine what troubles me to-night?
I always knew what I desired before,
Nor ever found delight to wish in vain.
But now I cannot tell thee what I seek;
I know not; something sweet, since it is sweet
Even to desire; it is thy sport, false sister;
Thou hast discovered some enchantment old,
Whose spells have stolen my spirit as I slept
And mingled it with thine: for when just now
We kiss'd, I felt within thy parted lips
The sweet air that sustain'd me, and the warmth
Of the life-blood, for loss of which I faint,
Quiver'd between our intertwining arms.»
I answer'd not, for the Eastern star grew pale,
But fled to thee.

ASIA.

Thou speakest, but thy words
Are as the air: I feel them not: Oh, lift
Thine eyes, that I may read his written soul!

PANTHEA.

I lift them, though they droop beneath the load
Of that they would express: what canst thou see
But thine own fairest shadow imaged there?

ASIA.

Thine eyes are like the deep, blue, boundless heaven
Contracted to two circles underneath
Their long, fine lashes; dark, far, measureless,
Orb within orb, and line through line inwoven.

PANTHEA.

Why lookest thou as if a spirit past?

ASIA.

There is a change: beyond their inmost depth
I see a shade, a shape: 't is He, array'd
In the soft light of his own smiles, which spread
Like radiance from the cloud-surrounded morn.
Prometheus, it is thine! depart not yet!
Say not those smiles that we shall meet again
Within that bright pavilion which their beams
Shall build on the waste world? The dream is told.
What shape is that between us? Its rude hair
Roughens the wind that lifts it, its regard
Is wild and quick, yet 't is a thing of air
For through its grey robe gleams the golden dew
Whose stars the noon has quench'd not.

DREAM.

Follow! Follow!

PANTHEA.

It is mine other dream.

ASIA.

It disappears.

PANTHEA.

It passes now into my mind. Methought
As we sate here, the flower-infolding buds
Burst on yon lightning-blasted almond-tree,
When swift from the white Scythian wilderness
A wind swept forth wrinkling the Earth with frost:
I looked, and all the blossoms were blown down;
But on each leaf was stamped, as the blue bells
Of Hyacinth tell Apollo's written grief,
O, follow, follow!

ASIA.

As you speak, your words
Fill, pause by pause, my own forgotten sleep
With shapes. Methought among the lawns together
We wander'd, underneath the young grey dawn,
And multitudes of dense white fleecy clouds
Were wandering in thick flocks along the mountains
Shepherded by the slow, unwilling wind;
And the white dew on the new-bladed grass,
Just piercing the dark earth, hung silently;
And there was more which I remember not:
But on the shadows of the morning clouds,
Athwart the purple mountain slope, was written
Follow, O, follow! As they vanished by,
And on each herb, from which Heaven's dew had fallen,
The like was stamp'd, as with a withering fire,
A wind arose among the pines; it shook
The clinging music from their boughs, and then
Low, sweet, faint sounds, like the farewell of ghosts,
Were heard: Oh, follow, follow, follow me!
And then I said; « Panthea, look on me.»
But in the depth of those beloved eyes
Still I saw, follow, follow!

ECHO.

Follow, follow!

PANTHEA.

The crags, this clear spring morning, mock our voices,
As they were spirit-tongued.

ASIA.

It is some being
Around the crags. What fine clear sounds! O, list!

ECHOES (*unseen*).

Echoes we: listen!
We cannot stay:
As dew-stars glisten
Then fade away—
Child of Ocean!

ASIA.

Hark! Spirits, speak. The liquid responses
Of their aërial tongues yet sound.

PANTHEA.

I hear.

ECHOES.

O, follow, follow,
As our voice recedeth
Through the caverns hollow,
Where the forest spreadeth;
(*More distant.*)
O, follow, follow!
Through the caverns hollow,
As the song floats thou pursue,
Where the wild bee never flew,
Through the noon-tide darkness deep,
By the odour-breathing sleep
Of faint night-flowers, and the waves
At the fountain-lighted caves,
While our music, wild and sweet,
Mocks thy gently falling feet,
Child of Ocean!

ASIA.

Shall we pursue the sound? It grows more faint
And distant.

PANTHEA.

List! the strain floats nearer now.

ECHOES.

In the world unknown
Sleeps a voice unspoken;
By thy step alone
Can its rest be broken;
Child of Ocean!

ASIA.

How the notes sink upon the ebbing wind!

ECHOES.

O, follow, follow!
Through the caverns hollow,
As the song floats thou pursue,
By the woodland noon-tide-dew;
By the forests, lakes, and fountains,
Through the many-folded mountains;
To the rents, and gulfs, and chasms,
Where the Earth reposed from spasms,
On the day when He and thou
Parted, to commingle now;
Child of Ocean!

ASIA.

Come, sweet Panthea, link thy hand in mine,
And follow, ere the voices fade away.

SCENE II.

A Forest, intermingled with Rocks and Caverns. ASIA *and* PANTHEA *pass into it. Two young Fauns are sitting on a Rock, listening.*

SEMICHORUS I. OF SPIRITS.

The path through which that lovely twain
Have past, by cedar, pine, and yew,
And each dark tree that ever grew,
Is curtain'd out from Heaven's wide blue;
Nor sun, nor moon, nor wind, nor rain,
Can pierce its interwoven bowers,
Nor aught, save where some cloud of dew,
Drifted along the earth-creeping breeze,
Between the trunks of the hoar trees,
Hangs each a pearl in the pale flowers
Of the green laurel, blown anew;
And bends, and then fades silently,
One frail and fair anemone:
Or when some star of many a one
That climbs and wanders through steep night,
Has found the cleft through which alone
Beams fall from high those depths upon
Ere it is borne away, away,
By the swift Heavens that cannot stay,
It scatters drops of golden light,
Like lines of rain that ne'er unite:
And the gloom divine is all around;
And underneath is the mossy ground.

SEMICHORUS II.

There the voluptuous nightingales,
Are awake through all the broad noon-day,
When one with bliss or sadness fails,
And through the windless ivy-boughs,
Sick with sweet love, droops dying away
On its mate's music-panting bosom;
Another from the swinging blossom,
Watching to catch the languid close
Of the last strain, then lifts on high
The wings of the weak melody,
Till some new strain of feeling bear
The song, and all the woods are mute;
When there is heard through the dim air
The rush of wings, and rising there
Like many a lake-surrounding flute,
Sounds overflow the listener's brain
So sweet, that joy is almost pain.

SEMICHORUS I.

There those enchanted eddies play
Of echoes, music-tongued, which draw,
By Demogorgon's mighty law,
With melting rapture, or sweet awe,
All spirits on that secret way;
As inland boats are driven to Ocean
Down streams made strong with mountain-thaw;
And first there comes a gentle sound
To those in talk or slumber bound,
And wakes the destined soft emotion,
Attracts, impels them: those who saw
Say from the breathing earth behind
There streams a plume-uplifting wind
Which drives them on their path, while they
Believe their own swift wings and feet
The sweet desires within obey:
And so they float upon their way,
Until, still sweet, but loud and strong,
The storm of sound is driven along,
Suck'd up and hurrying as they fleet
Behind, its gathering billows meet
And to the fatal mountain bear
Like clouds amid the yielding air.

FIRST FAUN.

Canst thou imagine where those spirits live

Which make such delicate music in the woods?
We haunt within the least frequented caves
And closest coverts, and we know these wilds,
Yet never meet them, though we hear them oft:
Where may they hide themselves?

SECOND FAUN.

'T is hard to tell:
I have heard those more skilled in spirits say,
The bubbles, which enchantment of the sun
Sucks from the pale faint water-flowers that pave
The oozy bottom of clear lakes and pools,
Are the pavilions where such dwell and float
Under the green and golden atmosphere
Which noon-tide kindles through the woven leaves;
And when these burst, and the thin fiery air,
The which they breathed within those lucent domes,
Ascends to flow like meteors through the night,
They ride on them, and rein their headlong speed,
And bow their burning crests, and glide in fire
Under the waters of the earth again.

FIRST FAUN.

If such live thus, have others other lives,
Under pink blossoms or within the bells
Of meadow flowers, or folded violets deep,
Or on their dying odours, when they die,
Or on the sunlight of the sphered dew?

SECOND FAUN.

Aye, many more which we may well divine.
But should we stay to speak, noontide would come,
And thwart Silenus find his goats undrawn,
And grudge to sing those wise and lovely songs
Of fate, and chance, and God, and Chaos old,
And Love, and the chained Titan's woful dooms.
And how he shall be loosed, and make the earth
One brotherhood: delightful strains which cheer
Our solitary twilights, and which charm
To silence the unenvying nightingales.

SCENE III.

A Pinnacle of Rock among Mountains. ASIA *and* PANTHEA.

PANTHEA.

Hither the sound has borne us—to the realm
Of Demogorgon, and the mighty portal,
Like a volcano's meteor-breathing chasm,
Whence the oracular vapour is hurl'd up
Which lonely men drink wandering in their youth,
And call truth, virtue, love, genius, or joy,
That maddening wine of life, whose dregs they drain
To deep intoxication; and uplift,
Like Mænads who cry loud, Evoe! Evoe!
The voice which is contagion to the world.

ASIA.

Fit throne for such a Power! Magnificent!
How glorious art thou, Earth! And if thou be
The shadow of some spirit lovelier still,
Though evil stain its work, and it should be
Like its creation, weak yet beautiful,
I could fall down and worship that and thee.
Even now my heart adoreth: Wonderful!
Look, sister, ere the vapour dim thy brain:
Beneath is a wide plain of billowy mist,
As a lake, paving in the morning sky,
With azure waves which burst in silver light,
Some Indian vale. Behold it, rolling on
Under the curdling winds, and islanding
The peak whereon we stand, midway, around,
Encinctured by the dark and blooming forests,
Dim twilight-lawns, and stream-illumined caves,
And wind-enchanted shapes of wandering mist;
And far on high the keen sky-cleaving mountains
From icy spires of sun-like radiance fling
The dawn, as lifted Ocean's dazzling spray,
From some Atlantic islet scatter'd up,
Spangles the wind with lamp-like water-drops,
The vale is girdled with their walls, a howl
Of cataracts from their thaw-cloven ravines
Satiates the listening wind, continuous, vast,
Awful as silence. Hark! the rushing snow!
The sun-awaken'd avalanche! whose mass,
Thrice sifted by the storm, had gather'd there
Flake after flake, in heaven-defying minds
As thought by thought is piled, till some great truth
Is loosen'd, and the nations echo round,
Shaken to their roots, as do the mountains now.

PANTHEA.

Look how the gusty sea of mist is breaking
In crimson foam, even at our feet! it rises
As Ocean at the enchantment of the moon
Round foodless men wreck'd on some oozy isle.

ASIA.

The fragments of the cloud are scattered up;
The wind that lifts them disentwines my hair;
Its billows now sweep o'er mine eyes; my brain
Grows dizzy; I see thin shapes within the mist.

PANTHEA.

A countenance with beckoning smiles: there burns
An azure fire within its golden locks!
Another and another: hark! they speak!

SONG OF SPIRITS.

To the deep, to the deep,
Down, down!
Through the shade of sleep,
Through the cloudy strife
Of Death and of Life;
Through the veil and the bar
Of things which seem and are,
Even to the steps of the remotest throne,
Down, down!

While the sound whirls around,
Down, down!
As the fawn draws the hound,
As the lightning the vapour,
As a weak moth the taper;
Death, despair; love, sorrow;
Time both; to-day, to-morrow;
As steel obeys the spirit of the stone,
Down, down!

Through the grey, void abysm,
Down, down!
Where the air is no prism,
And the moon and stars are not,
And the cavern-crags wear not
The radiance of Heaven,
Nor the gloom to Earth given,
Where there is one pervading, one alone,
Down, down!

In the depth of the deep
Down, down!
Like veil'd lightning asleep,
Like the spark nursed in embers,
The last look Love remembers,
Like a diamond, which shines
On the dark wealth of mines,
A spell is treasured but for thee alone.
Down, down!

We have bound thee, we guide thee;
Down, down!
With the bright form beside thee;
Resist not the weakness,
Such strength is in meekness
That the Eternal, the Immortal,
Must unloose through life's portal
The snake-like Doom coil'd underneath his throne
By that alone.

SCENE IV.

The Cave of DEMOGORGON, ASIA *and* PANTHEA.

PANTHEA.

What veiled form sits on that ebon throne?

ASIA.

The veil has fallen.

PANTHEA.

I see a mighty darkness
Filling the seat of power, and rays of gloom
Dart round, as light from the meridian sun,
Ungazed upon and shapeless; neither limb,
Nor form, nor outline; yet we feel it is
A living Spirit.

DEMOGORGON.

Ask what thou wouldst know.

ASIA.

What canst thou tell?

DEMOGORGON.

All things thou darest demand.

ASIA.

Who made the living world?

DEMOGORGON.

God.

ASIA.

Who made all
That it contains? thought, passion, reason, will,
Imagination?

DEMOGORGON.

God: Almighty God.

ASIA.

Who made that sense which, when the winds of spring
In rarest visitation, or the voice
Of one beloved heard in youth alone,
Fills the faint eyes with falling tears which dim
The radiant looks of unbewailing flowers,
And leaves this peopled earth a solitude
When it returns no more?

DEMOGORGON.

Merciful God.

ASIA.

And who made terror, madness, crime, remorse,
Which from the links of the great chain of things,
To every thought within the mind of man
Sway and drag heavily, and each one reels
Under the load towards the pit of death;
Abandon'd hope, and love that turns to hate;
And self-contempt, bitterer to drink than blood;
Pain, whose unheeded and familiar speech
Is howling, and keen shrieks, day after day;
And Hell, or the sharp fear of Hell?

DEMOGORGON.

He reigns.

ASIA.

Utter his name: a world pining in pain
Asks but his name: curses shall drag him down.

DEMOGORGON.

He reigns.

ASIA.

I feel, I know it: who?

DEMOGORGON.

He reigns.

ASIA.

Who reigns? There was the Heaven and Earth at first,
And Light and Love; then Saturn, from whose throne
Time fell, an envious shadow: such the state
Of the earth's primal spirits beneath his sway,
As the calm joy of flowers and living leaves
Before the wind or sun has wither'd them
And semi-vital worms; but he refused
The birthright of their being, knowledge, power,
The skill which wields the elements, the thought
Which pierces this dim universe like light,
Self-empire, and the majesty of love;
For thirst of which they fainted. Then Prometheus
Gave wisdom, which is strength, to Jupiter,
And with this law alone, « Let man be free,»
Clothed him with the dominion of wide Heaven.
To know nor faith, nor love, nor law; to be
Omnipotent but friendless is to reign;
And Jove now reign'd; for on the race of man
First famine, and then toil, and then disease,
Strife, wounds, and ghastly death unseen before,
Fell; and the unseasonable seasons drove,
With alternating shafts of frost and fire,
Their shelterless, pale tribes to mountain caves:
And in their desert hearts fierce wants he sent,
And mad disquietudes, and shadows idle
Of unreal good, which levied mutual war,
So ruining the lair wherein they raged.
Prometheus saw, and waked the legion'd hopes
Which sleep within folded Elysian flowers,
Nepenthe, Moly, Amaranth, fadeless blooms,
That they might hide with thin and rainbow wings
The shape of Death; and Love he sent to bind
The disunited tendrils of that vine
Which bears the wine of life, the human heart;
And he tamed fire which, like some beast of prey,
Most terrible, but lovely play'd beneath
The frown of man; and tortured to his will
Iron and gold, the slaves and signs of power,
And gems and poisons, and all subtlest forms
Hidden beneath the mountains and the waves.
He gave man speech, and speech created thought,
Which is the measure of the universe;
And Science struck the thrones of earth and heaven,
Which shook, but fell not; and the harmonious mind
Pour'd itself forth in all-prophetic song;
And music lifted up the listening spirit
Until it walk'd, exempt from mortal care,

Godlike, o'er the clear billows of sweet sound;
And human hands first mimick'd and then mock'd,
With moulded limbs more lovely than its own,
The human form, till marble grew divine;
And mothers, gazing, drank the love men see
Reflected in their race, behold, and perish.
He told the hidden power of herbs and springs,
And Disease drank and slept. Death grew like sleep.
He taught the implicated orbits woven
Of the wide-wandering stars; and how the sun
Changes his lair, and by what secret spell
The pale moon is transform'd, when her broad eye
Gazes not on the interlunar sea:
He taught to rule, as life directs the limbs,
The tempest-winged chariots of the Ocean,
And the Celt knew the Indian. Cities then
Were built, and through their snow-like columns flow'd
The warm winds, and the azure æther shone,
And the blue sea and shadowy hills were seen.
Such, the alleviations of his state,
Prometheus gave to man, for which he hangs
Withering in destined pain: but who rains down
Evil, the immedicable plague, which, while
Man looks on his creation like a God
And sees that it is glorious, drives him on
The wreck of his own will, the scorn of earth,
The outcast, the abandon'd, the alone?
Not Jove: while yet his frown shook heaven, aye when
His adversary from adamantine chains
Cursed him, he trembled like a slave. Declare
Who is his master? Is he too a slave?

DEMOGORGON.

All spirits are enslaved which serve things evil:
Thou knowest if Jupiter be such or no.

ASIA.

Whom called'st thou God?

DEMOGORGON.

I spoke but as ye speak,
For Jove is the supreme of living things.

ASIA.

Who is the master of the slave?

DEMOGORGON.

If the abysm
Could vomit forth its secrets—But a voice
Is wanting, the deep truth is imageless;
For what would it avail to bid thee gaze
On the revolving world? What to bid speak
Fate, Time, Occasion, Chance and Change? To these
All things are subject but eternal Love.

ASIA.

So much I ask'd before, and my heart gave
The response thou hast given; and of such truths
Each to itself must be the oracle.
One more demand; and do thou answer me
As my own soul would answer, did it know
That which I ask. Prometheus shall arise
Henceforth the sun of this rejoicing world:
When shall the destined hour arrive?

DEMOGORGON.

Behold!

ASIA.

The rocks are cloven, and through the purple night
I see cars drawn by rainbow-winged steeds
Which trample the dim winds: in each there stands
A wild-eyed charioteer urging their flight.
Some look behind, as fiends pursued them there,
And yet I see no shapes but the keen stars:
Others, with burning eyes, lean forth, and drink
With eager lips the wind of their own speed,
As if the thing they loved fled on before,
And now, even now, they clasp'd it. Their bright locks
Stream like a comet's flashing hair: they all
Sweep onward.

DEMOGORGON.

These are the immortal Hours,
Of whom thou didst demand. One waits for thee.

ASIA.

A spirit with a dreadful countenance
Checks its dark chariot by the craggy gulf.
Unlike thy brethren, ghastly charioteer,
Who art thou? Whither wouldst thou bear me? Speak!

SPIRIT.

I am the shadow of a destiny
More dread than is my aspect: ere yon planet
Has set, the darkness which ascends with me
Shall wrap in lasting night heaven's kingless throne.

ASIA.

What meanest thou?

PANTHEA.

That terrible shadow floats
Up from its throne, as may the lurid smoke
Of earthquake-ruin'd cities o'er the sea.
Lo! it ascends the car; the coursers fly
Terrified: watch its path among the stars
Blackening the night!

ASIA.

Thus I am answer'd: strange!

PANTHEA.

See, near the verge, another chariot stays;
An ivory shell inlaid with crimson fire,
Which comes and goes within its sculptured rim
Of delicate strange tracery; the young spirit
That guides it has the dove-like eyes of hope;
How its soft smiles attract the soul! as light
Lures winged insects through the lampless air.

SPIRIT.

My coursers are fed with the lightning,
They drink of the whirlwind's stream,
And when the red morning is brightning
They bathe in the fresh sunbeam;
They have strength for their swiftness I deem,
Then ascend with me, daughter of Ocean.

I desire: and their speed makes night kindle;
I fear: they outstrip the Typhoon;
Ere the cloud piled on Atlas can dwindle
We encircle the earth and the moon:
We shall rest from long labours at noon:
Then ascend with me, daughter of Ocean.

SCENE V.

The Car pauses within a Cloud on the Top of a snowy Mountain. ASIA, PANTHEA, *and the* SPIRIT OF THE HOUR.

SPIRIT.

On the brink of the night and the morning
My coursers are wont to respire;
But the Earth has just whisper'd a warning
That their flight must be swifter than fire:
They shall drink the hot speed of desire!

ASIA.

Thou breathest on their nostrils, but my breath
Would give them swifter speed.

SPIRIT.

Alas! it could not.

PANTHEA.

Oh Spirit! pause, and tell whence is the light
Which fills the cloud? the sun is yet unrisen.

SPIRIT.

The sun will rise not until noon. Apollo
Is held in heaven by wonder; and the light
Which fills this vapour, as the aerial hue
Of fountain-gazing roses fills the water,
Flows from thy mighty sister.

PANTHEA.

Yes, I feel—

ASIA.

What is it with thee, sister? Thou art pale.

PANTHEA.

How thou art changed! I dare not look on thee;
I feel but see thee not. I scarce endure
The radiance of thy beauty. Some good change
Is working in the elements, which suffer
Thy presence thus unveil'd. The Nereids tell
That on the day when the clear hyaline
Was cloven at thy uprise, and thou didst stand
Within a veined shell, which floated on
Over the calm floor of the crystal sea,
Among the Egean isles, and by the shores
Which bear thy name; love, like the atmosphere
Of the sun's fire filling the living world,
Burst from thee, and illumined earth and heaven
And the deep ocean and the sunless caves
And all that dwells within them; till grief cast
Eclipse upon the soul from which it came:
Such art thou now; nor is it I alone,
Thy sister, thy companion, thine own chosen one,
But the whole world which seeks thy sympathy.
Hearest thou not sounds i' the air which speak the love
Of all articulate beings? Feelest thou not
The inanimate winds enamour'd of thee? List!

[*Music.*

ASIA.

Thy words are sweeter than aught else but his
Whose echoes they are: yet all love is sweet,
Given or return'd. Common as light is love,
And its familiar voice wearies not ever.
Like the wide heaven, the all-sustaining air,
It makes the reptile equal to the God:
They who inspire it most are fortunate,
As I am now; but those who feel it most
Are happier still, after long sufferings,
As I shall soon become.

PANTHEA.

List! Spirits, speak.

VOICE (*in the air, singing*).

Life of Life! thy lips enkindle
With their love the breath between them;
And thy smiles before they dwindle
Make the cold air fire; then screen them
In those looks, where whoso gazes
Faints, entangled in their mazes.

Child of Light! thy lips are burning
Through the vest which seems to hide them;
As the radiant lines of morning
Through the clouds ere they divide them;
And this atmosphere divinest
Shrouds thee wheresoe'er thou shinest.

Fair are others; none beholds thee,
But thy voice sounds low and tender
Like the fairest, for it folds thee
From the sight, that liquid splendour,
And all feel, yet see thee never,
As I feel now, lost for ever!

Lamp of Earth! where'er thou movest
Its dim shapes are clad with brightness,
And the souls of whom thou lovest
Walk upon the winds with lightness,
Till they fail, as I am failing,
Dizzy, lost, yet unbewailing!

ASIA.

My soul is an enchanted boat,
Which, like a sleeping swan, doth float
Upon the silver waves of thy sweet singing;
And thine doth like an angel sit
Beside the helm conducting it,
Whilst all the winds with melody are ringing.
It seems to float ever, for ever,
Upon that many-winding river,
Between mountains, woods, abysses,
A paradise of wildernesses!
Till, like one in slumber bound,
Borne to the ocean, I float down, around,
Into a sea profound, of ever-spreading sound:
Meanwhile thy spirit lifts its pinions
In music's most serene dominions;
Catching the winds that fan that happy heaven.
And we sail on, away, afar,
Without a course, without a star,
But, by the instinct of sweet music driven;
Till through Elysian garden islets
By thee, most beautiful of pilots,
Where never mortal pinnace glided,
The boat of my desire is guided:
Realms where the air we breathe is love,
Which in the winds on the waves doth move,
Harmonizing this earth with what we feel above.

We have pass'd Age's icy caves,
And Manhood's dark and tossing waves,
And Youth's smooth ocean, smiling to betray:
Beyond the glassy gulfs we flee
Of shadow-peopled Infancy,
Through Death and Birth, to a diviner day;
A paradise of vaulted bowers
Lit by downward-gazing flowers,
And watery paths that wind between
Wildernesses calm and green,
Peopled by shapes too bright to see,
And rest, having beheld; somewhat like thee;
Which walk upon the sea, and chaunt melodiously!

ACT III.

SCENE I.

Heaven. JUPITER *on his Throne;* THETIS *and the other Deities assembled.*

JUPITER.

Ye congregated powers of heaven, who share
The glory and the strength of him ye serve,
Rejoice! henceforth I am omnipotent.
All else had been subdued to me; alone
The soul of man, like an unextinguish'd fire,
Yet burns towards heaven with fierce reproach, and doubt,
And lamentation, and reluctant prayer,
Hurling up insurrection, which might make
Our antique empire insecure, though built
On eldest faith, and hell's coeval, fear;
And though my curses through the pendulous air,
Like snow on herbless peaks, fall flake by flake,
And cling to it; though under my wrath's might
It climb the crags of life, step after step,
Which wound it, as ice wounds unsandall'd feet,
It yet remains supreme o'er misery,
Aspiring, unrepress'd, yet soon to fall:
Even now have I begotten a strange wonder,
That fatal child, the terror of the earth,
Who waits but till the distant hour arrive,
Bearing from Demogorgon's vacant throne
The dreadful might of ever-living limbs
Which clothed that awful spirit unbeheld,
To redescend, and trample out the spark.
Pour forth heaven's wine, Idæan Ganymede,
And let it fill the Dædal cups like fire,
And from the flower-inwoven soil divine
Ye all-triumphant harmonies arise,
As dew from earth under the twilight stars:
Drink! be the nectar circling through your veins
The soul of joy, ye ever-living Gods,
Till exultation burst in one wide voice
Like music from Elysian winds.
And thou
Ascend beside me, veil'd in the light
Of the desire which makes thee one with me,
Thetis, bright image of eternity!
When thou didst cry, « Insufferable might!
God! Spare me! I sustain not the quick flames,
The penetrating presence; all my being,
Like him whom the Numidian seps did thaw
Into a dew with poison, is dissolved,
Sinking through its foundations:» even then
Two mighty spirits, mingling, made a third
Mightier than either, which, unbodied now,
Between us floats, felt, although unbeheld,
Waiting the incarnation, which ascends,
(Hear ye the thunder of the fiery wheels
Griding the winds?) from Demogorgon's throne.
Victory! victory! Feel'st thou not, O world!
The earthquake of his chariot thundering up
Olympus?

[*The Car of the* HOUR *arrives.* DEMOGORGON *descends, and moves towards the Throne of* JUPITER.
Awful shape, what art thou? Speak!

DEMOGORGON.

Eternity. Demand no direr name.
Descend, and follow me down the abyss.
I am thy child, as thou wert Saturn's child;
Mightier than thee: and we must dwell together
Henceforth in darkness. Lift thy lightnings not.
The tyranny of heaven none may retain,
Or reassume, or hold, succeeding thee:
Yet if thou wilt, as 't is the destiny
Of trodden worms to writhe till they are dead,
Put forth thy might.

JUPITER.

Detested prodigy!
Even thus beneath the deep Titanian prisons
I trample thee! thou lingerest?
Mercy! mercy!
No pity, no release, no respite! Oh,
That thou wouldst make mine enemy my judge,
Even where he hangs, sear'd by my long revenge,
On Caucasus! he would not doom me thus.
Gentle, and just, and dreadless, is he not
The monarch of the world? What art thou?
No refuge! no appeal!
Sink with me then,
We two will sink on the wide waves of ruin,
Even as a vulture and a snake outspent
Drop, twisted in inextricable fight,
Into a shoreless sea. Let hell unlock
Its mounded oceans of tempestuous fire,
And whelm on them into the bottomless void
This desolated world, and thee, and me,
The conqueror and the conquer'd, and the wreck
Of that for which they combated.
Ai! Ai!
The elements obey me not. I sink
Dizzily down, ever, for ever, down.
And, like a cloud, mine enemy above
Darkens my fall with victory! Ai, Ai!

SCENE II.

The Mouth of a great River in the Island Atlantis. OCEAN *is discovered reclining near the Shore;* APOLLO *stands beside him.*

OCEAN.

He fell, thou sayest, beneath his conqueror's frown?

APOLLO.

Aye, when the strife was ended which made dim
The orb I rule, and shook the solid stars,
The terrors of his eye illumined heaven
With sanguine light, through the thick ragged skirts
Of the victorious darkness, as he fell:
Like the last glare of day's red agony,
Which, from a rent among the fiery clouds,
Burns far along the tempest-wrinkled deep.

OCEAN.

He sunk to the abyss? To the dark void?

APOLLO.

An eagle so caught in some bursting cloud
On Caucasus, his thunder-baffled wings
Entangled in the whirlwind, and his eyes
Which gazed on the undazzling sun, now blinded
By the white lightning, while the ponderous hail
Beats on his struggling form, which sinks at length
Prone, and the aerial ice clings over it.

OCEAN.

Henceforth the fields of Heaven-reflecting sea
Which are my realm, will heave, unstain'd with blood,
Beneath the uplifting winds, like plains of corn

Sway'd by the summer air; my streams will flow
Round many peopled continents, and round
Fortunate isles; and from their glassy thrones
Blue Proteus and his humid nymphs shall mark
The shadow of fair ships, as mortals see
The floating bark of the light laden moon
With that white star, its sightless pilot's crest,
Borne down the rapid sunset's ebbing sea;
Tracking their path no more by blood and groans,
And desolation, and the mingled voice
Of slavery and command; but by the light
Of wave-reflected flowers, and floating odours,
And music soft, and mild, free, gentle voices,
That sweetest music, such as spirits love.

APOLLO.

And I shall gaze not on the deeds which make
My mind obscure with sorrow, as eclipse
Darkens the sphere I guide; but list, I hear
The small, clear, silver lute of the young Spirit
That sits on the morning star.

OCEAN.

Thou must away;
Thy steeds will pause at even, till when farewell:
The loud deep calls me home even now to feed it
With azure calm out of the emerald urns
Which stand for ever full beside my throne.
Behold the Nereids under the green sea,
Their wavering limbs borne on the wind-like stream,
Their white arms lifted o'er their streaming hair
With garlands pied and starry sea-flower crowns,
Hastening to grace their mighty sister's joy.

[*A sound of waves is heard.*

It is the unpastured sea hungering for calm.
Peace, monster; I come now. Farewell.

APOLLO.

Farewell.

SCENE III.

Caucasus. PROMETHEUS, HERCULES, IONE, *the* EARTH, SPIRITS, ASIA, *and* PANTHEA, *borne in the Car with the* SPIRIT OF THE HOUR.

HERCULES *unbinds* PROMETHEUS, *who descends.*

HERCULES.

Most glorious among spirits! thus doth strength
To wisdom, courage, and long-suffering love,
And thee, who art the form they animate,
Minister like a slave.

PROMETHEUS.

Thy gentle words
Are sweeter even than freedom long desired
And long delay'd.
Asia, thou light of life,
Shadow of beauty unbeheld: and ye,
Fair sister nymphs, who made long years of pain
Sweet to remember, through your love and care:
Henceforth we will not part. There is a cave,
All overgrown with trailing odorous plants,
Which curtain out the day with leaves and flowers,
And paved with veined emerald, and a fountain
Leaps in the midst with an awakening sound.
From its curved roof the mountain's frozen tears
Like snow, or silver, or long diamond spires,
Hang downward, raining forth a doubtful light:
And there is heard the ever-moving air,
Whispering without from tree to tree, and birds,
And bees; and all around are mossy seats,
And the rough walls are clothed with long soft grass;
A simple dwelling, which shall be our own;
Where we will sit and talk of time and change,
As the world ebbs and flows, ourselves unchanged.
What can hide man from mutability?
And if ye sigh, then I will smile; and thou,
Ione, shalt chaunt fragments of sea-music,
Until I weep, when ye shall smile away
The tears she brought, which yet were sweet to shed.
We will entangle buds and flowers and beams
Which twinkle on the fountain's brim, and make
Strange combinations out of common things,
Like human babes in their brief innocence;
And we will search, with looks and words of love,
For hidden thoughts, each lovelier than the last,
Our unexhausted spirits; and like lutes
Touch'd by the skill of the enamour'd wind,
Weave harmonies divine, yet ever new,
From difference sweet where discord cannot be;
And hither come, sped on the charmed winds,
Which meet from all the points of heaven, as bees
From every flower aërial Enna feeds,
At their known island-homes in Himera,
The echoes of the human world, which tell
Of the low voice of love, almost unheard,
And dove-eyed pity's murmur'd pain, and music,
Itself the echo of the heart, and all
That tempers or improves man's life, now free;
And lovely apparitions, dim at first,
Then radiant, as the mind, arising bright
From the embrace of beauty, whence the forms
Of which these are the phantoms, casts on them
The gather'd rays which are reality,
Shall visit us, the progeny immortal
Of Painting, Sculpture, and wrapt Poesy,
And arts, though unimagined, yet to be.
The wandering voices and the shadows these
Of all that man becomes, the mediators
Of that best worship love, by him and us
Given and return'd; swift shapes and sounds, which grow
More fair and soft as man grows wise and kind,
And veil by veil, evil and error fall:
Such virtue has the cave and place around.

[*Turning to the* SPIRIT OF THE HOUR.

For thee, fair Spirit, one toil remains. Ione,
Give her that curved shell, which Proteus old
Made Asia's nuptial boon, breathing within it
A voice to be accomplish'd, and which thou
Didst hide in grass under the hollow rock.

IONE.

Thou most desired Hour, more loved and lovely
Than all thy sisters, this is the mystic shell;
See the pale azure fading into silver
Lining it with a soft yet glowing light:
Looks it not like lull'd music sleeping there?

SPIRIT.

It seems in truth the fairest shell of Ocean:
Its sound must be at once both sweet and strange.

PROMETHEUS.

Go, borne over the cities of mankind
On whirlwind-footed coursers: once again
Outspeed the sun around the orbed world;
And as thy chariot cleaves the kindling air,

Thou breathe into the many-folded shell,
Loosening its mighty music; it shall be
As thunder mingled with clear echoes: then
Return; and thou shalt dwell beside our cave.
And thou, O, Mother Earth!—

THE EARTH.

I hear, I feel;
Thy lips are on me, and thy touch runs down
Even to the adamantine central gloom
Along these marble nerves; 't is life, 't is joy,
And through, my wither'd, old, and icy frame
The warmth of an immortal youth shoots down
Circling. Henceforth the many children fair
Folded in my sustaining arms; all plants,
And creeping forms, and insects rainbow-wing'd,
And birds, and beasts, and fish, and human shapes,
Which drew disease and pain from my wan bosom,
Draining the poison of despair, shall take
And interchange sweet nutriment; to me
Shall they become like sister-antelopes
By one fair dam, snow-white and swift as wind,
Nursed among lilies near a brimming stream.
The dew-mists of my sunless sleep shall float
Under the stars like balm: night-folded flowers
Shall suck unwitting hues in their repose:
And men and beasts in happy dreams shall gather
Strength for the coming day, and all its joy:
And death shall be the last embrace of her
Who takes the life she gave, even as a mother
Folding her child, says, «Leave me not again.»

ASIA.

Oh, mother! wherefore speak the name of death?
Cease they to love, and move, and breathe, and speak,
Who die?

THE EARTH.

It would avail not to reply:
Thou art immortal, and this tongue is known
But to the uncommunicating dead.
Death is the veil which those who live call life:
They sleep, and it is lifted: and meanwhile
In mild variety the seasons mild
With rainbow-skirted showers, and odorous winds,
And long blue meteors cleansing the dull night.
And the life-kindling shafts of the keen sun's
All-piercing bow, and the dew-mingled rain
Of the calm moonbeams, a soft influence mild,
Shall clothe the forests and the fields, aye, even
The crag-built deserts of the barren deep,
With ever-living leaves, and fruits, and flowers.
And thou! There is a cavern where my spirit
Was panted forth in anguish whilst thy pain
Made my heart mad, and those that did inhale it
Became mad too, and built a temple there,
And spoke, and were oracular, and lured
The erring nations round to mutual war,
And faithless faith, such as Jove kept with thee;
Which breath now rises, as amongst tall weeds
A violet's exhalation, and it fills
With a serener light and crimson air
Intense, yet soft, the rocks and woods around;
It feeds the quick growth of the serpent vine,
And the dark link'd ivy tangling wild,
And budding, blown, or odour-faded blooms
Which star the winds with points of colour'd light.
As they rain through them, and bright golden globes
Of fruit, suspended in their own green heaven,
And through their veined leaves and amber stems
The flowers whose purple and translucid bowls
Stand ever mantling with aërial dew,
The drink of spirits: and it circles round,
Like the soft waving wings of noonday dreams,
Inspiring calm and happy thoughts, like mine,
Now thou art thus restored. This cave is thine.
Arise! Appear!

[*A* SPIRIT *rises in the likeness of a winged child.*
This is my torch-bearer;
Who let his lamp out in old time with gazing
On eyes from which he kindled it anew
With love, which is as fire, sweet daughter mine,
For such is that within thine own. Run, wayward,
And guide this company beyond the peak
Of Bacchic Nysa, Mænad-haunted mountain,
And beyond Indus and its tribute rivers,
Trampling the torrent streams and glassy lakes
With feet unwet, unwearied, undelaying,
And up the green ravine, across the vale,
Beside the windless and crystalline pool,
Where ever lies, on unerasing waves,
The image of a temple, built above,
Distinct with column, arch, and architrave,
And palm-like capital, and over-wrought,
And populous most with living imagery,
Praxitelean shapes, whose marble smiles
Fill the hush'd air with everlasting love.
It is deserted now, but once it bore
Thy name, Prometheus; there the emulous youths
Bore to thy honour through the divine gloom
The lamp which was thine emblem; even as those
Who bear the untransmitted torch of hope
Into the grave, across the night of life,
As thou hast borne it most triumphantly
To this far goal of Time. Depart, farewell.
Beside that temple is the destined cave.

SCENE IV.

A Forest. In the Back-ground a Cave. PROMETHEUS, ASIA, PANTHEA, IONE, *and the* SPIRIT OF THE EARTH.

IONE.

Sister, it is not earthly: how it glides
Under the leaves! how on its head there burns
A light, like a green star, whose emerald beams
Are twined with its fair hair! how, as it moves,
The splendour drops in flakes upon the grass!
Knowest thou it?

PANTHEA.

It is the delicate spirit
That guides the earth through heaven. From afar
The populous constellations call that light
The loveliest of the planets; and sometimes
It floats along the spray of the salt sea,
Or makes its chariot of a foggy cloud,
Or walks through fields or cities while men sleep,
Or o'er the mountain tops, or down the rivers,
Or through the green waste wilderness, as now,
Wondering at all it sees. Before Jove reign'd
It loved our sister Asia, and it came
Each leisure hour to drink the liquid light
Out of her eyes, for which it said it thirsted
As one bit by a dipsas, and with her
It made its childish confidence, and told her

All it had known or seen, for it saw much,
Yet idly reason'd what it saw; and call'd her,
For whence it sprung it knew not, nor do I,
Mother, dear mother.

THE SPIRIT OF THE EARTH (*running to* ASIA).

Mother, dearest mother;
May I then talk with thee as I was wont?
May I then hide my eyes in thy soft arms,
After thy looks have made them tired of joy?
May I then play beside thee the long noons,
When work is none in the bright silent air?

ASIA.

I love thee, gentlest being! and henceforth
Can cherish thee unenvied: speak, I pray:
Thy simple talk once solaced, now delights.

SPIRIT OF THE EARTH.

Mother, I am grown wiser, though a child
Cannot be wise like thee, within this day;
And happier too; happier and wiser both.
Thou knowest that toads, and snakes, and loathly worms,
And venomous and malicious beasts, and boughs
That bore ill berries in the woods, were ever
A hindrance to my walks o'er the green world:
And that, among the haunts of humankind,
Hard-featured men, or with proud, angry looks,
Or cold, staid gait, or false and hollow smiles,
Or the dull sneer of self-loved ignorance,
Or other such foul masks, with which ill thoughts
Hide that fair being whom we spirits call man;
And women too, ugliest of all things evil
(Though fair, even in a world where thou art fair,
When good and kind, free and sincere like thee),
When false or frowning made me sick at heart
To pass them, though they slept, and I unseen.
Well, my path lately lay through a great city
Into the woody hills surrounding it:
A sentinel was sleeping at the gate:
When there was heard a sound, so loud, it shook
The towers amid the moonlight, yet more sweet
Than any voice but thine, sweetest of all;
A long, long sound, as it would never end:
And all the inhabitants leapt suddenly
Out of their rest, and gathered in the streets,
Looking in wonder up to Heaven, while yet
The music peal'd along. I hid myself
Within a fountain in the public square,
Where I lay like the reflex of the moon
Seen in a wave under green leaves: and soon
Those ugly human shapes and visages
Of which I spoke as having wrought me pain,
Past floating through the air, and fading still
Into the winds that scatter'd them; and those
From whom they past seemed mild and lovely forms
After some foul disguise had fallen, and all
Were somewhat changed, and after brief surprise
And greetings of delighted wonder, all
Went to their sleep again: and when the dawn
Came, wouldst thou think that toads, and snakes, and efts,
Could e'er be beautiful? yet so they were,
And that with little change of shape or hue:
All things had put their evil nature off:
I cannot tell my joy, when o'er a lake
Upon a drooping bough with nightshade twined,
I saw two azure halcyons clinging downward
And thinning one bright bunch of amber berries,
With quick long beaks, and in the deep there lay
Those lovely forms imaged as in a sky;
So with my thoughts full of these happy changes,
We meet again, the happiest change of all.

ASIA.

And never will we part, till thy chaste sister
Who guides the frozen and inconstant moon
Will look on thy more warm and equal light
Till her heart thaw like flakes of April snow
And love thee.

SPIRIT OF THE EARTH.

What! as Asia loves Prometheus?

ASIA.

Peace, wanton, thou art yet not old enough.
Think ye by gazing on each other's eyes
To multiply your lovely selves, and fill
With sphered fires the interlunar air?

SPIRIT OF THE EARTH.

Nay, mother, while my sister trims her lamp
'T is hard I should go darkling.

ASIA.

Listen; look!

The SPIRIT OF THE HOUR *enters.*

PROMETHEUS.

We feel what thou hast heard and seen: yet speak.

SPIRIT OF THE HOUR.

Soon as the sound had ceased whose thunder fill'd
The abysses of the sky and the wide earth,
There was a change: the impalpable thin air
And the all-circling sunlight were transform'd,
As if the sense of love dissolved in them
Had folded itself round the sphered world.
My vision then grew clear, and I could see
Into the mysteries of the universe:
Dizzy as with delight I floated down,
Winnowing the lightsome air with languid plumes,
My coursers sought their birth-place in the sun,
Where they henceforth will live exempt from toil
Pasturing flowers of vegetable fire.
And where my moonlike car will stand within
A temple, gazed upon by Phidian forms
Of thee, and Asia, and the Earth, and me,
And you fair nymphs looking the love we feel;
In memory of the tidings it has borne;
Beneath a dome fretted with graven flowers,
Poised on twelve columns of resplendent stone,
And open to the bright and liquid sky.
Yoked to it by an amphisbenic snake
The likeness of those winged steeds will mock
The light from which they find repose. Alas,
Whither has wandered now my partial tongue
When all remains untold which ye would hear?
As I have said, I floated to the earth:
It was, as it is still, the pain of bliss
To move, to breathe, to be; I wandering went
Among the haunts and dwellings of mankind,
And first was disappointed not to see
Such mighty change as I had felt within
Express'd in outward things; but soon I look'd,
And behold, thrones were kingless, and men walk'd
One with the other even as spirits do,
None fawn'd, none trampled; hate, disdain, or fear,
Self-love or self-contempt, on human brows
No more inscribed, as o'er the gate of hell,

"All hope abandon ye who enter here;"
None frown'd, none trembled, none with eager fear
Gazed on another's eye of cold command,
Until the subject of a tyrant's will
Became, worse fate, the abject of his own,
Which spurr'd him, like an outspent horse, to death.
None wrought his lips in truth-entangling lines
Which smiled the lie his tongue disdain'd to speak;
None, with firm sneer, trod out in his own heart
The sparks of love and hope till there remain'd
Those bitter ashes, a soul self-consumed,
And the wretch crept a vampire among men,
Infecting all with his own hideous ill;
None talk'd that common, false, cold, hollow talk
Which makes the heart deny the *yes* it breathes,
Yet question that unmeant hypocrisy
With such a self-mistrust as has no name.
And women, too, frank, beautiful, and kind
As the free heaven which rains fresh light and dew
On the wide earth, past; gentle radiant forms,
From custom's evil taint exempt and pure;
Speaking the wisdom once they could not think,
Looking emotions once they fear'd to feel,
And changed to all which once they dared not be,
Yet being now, made earth like heaven; nor pride,
Nor jealousy, nor envy, nor ill shame,
The bitterest of those drops of treasured gall,
Spoilt the sweet taste of the nepenthe, love.

Thrones, altars, judgment-seats, and prisons; wherein,
And beside which, by wretched men were borne
Sceptres, tiaras, swords, and chains, and tomes
Of reason'd wrong, glozed on by ignorance,
Were like those monstrous and barbaric shapes,
The ghosts of a no more remember'd fame,
Which, from their unworn obelisks, look forth
In triumph o'er the palaces and tombs
Of those who were their conquerors: mouldering round
Those imaged to the pride of kings and priests,
A dark yet mighty faith, a power as wide
As is the world it wasted, and are now
But an astonishment; even so the tools
And emblems of its last captivity,
Amid the dwellings of the peopled earth,
Stand, not o'erthrown, but unregarded now.
And those foul shapes, abhorr'd by god and man,
Which, under many a name and many a form
Strange, savage, ghastly, dark, and execrable,
Were Jupiter, the tyrant of the world;
And which the nations, panic-stricken, served
With blood, and hearts broken by long hope, and love
Dragg'd to his altars soiled and garlandless,
And slain among men's unreclaiming tears,
Flattering the thing they fear'd, which fear was hate,
Frown, mouldering fast, o'er their abandon'd shrines:
The painted veil, by those who were, call'd life,
Which mimick'd, as with colours idly spread,
All men believed and hoped, is torn aside;
The loathsome mask has fallen, the man remains
Sceptreless, free, uncircumscribed, but man
Equal, unclass'd, tribeless, and nationless,
Exempt from awe, worship, degree, the king
Over himself; just, gentle, wise: but man
Passionless; no, yet free from guilt or pain,
Which were, for his will made or suffer'd them,
Nor yet exempt, though ruling them like slaves,
From chance, and death, and mutability,
The clogs of that which else might oversoar
The loftiest star of unascended heaven,
Pinnacled dim in the intense inane.

ACT IV.

SCENE,—*A part of the Forest near the Cave of* PROMETHEUS. PANTHEA *and* IONE *are sleeping: they awaken gradually during the first Song.*

VOICE OF UNSEEN SPIRITS.

The pale stars are gone!
For the sun, their swift shepherd,
To their folds them compelling,
In the depths of the dawn,
Hastes, in meteor-eclipsing array, and they flee
Beyond his blue dwelling,
As fawns flee the leopard,
But where are ye?

A Train of dark Forms and Shadows passes by confusedly, singing.

Here, oh! here:
We bear the bier
Of the Father of many a cancell'd year!
Spectres we
Of the dead Hours be,
We bear Time to his tomb in eternity.

Strew, oh! strew
Hair, not yew!
Wet the dusty pall with tears, not dew!
Be the faded flowers
Of Death's bare bowers
Spread on the corpse of the King of Hours!

Haste, oh, haste!
As shades are chased,
Trembling, by day, from heaven's blue waste.
We melt away,
Like dissolving spray,
From the children of a diviner day,
With the lullaby
Of winds that die
On the bosom of their own harmony!

IONE.

What dark forms were they?

PANTHEA.

The past Hours weak and grey,
With the spoil which their toil
Raked together
From the conquest but One could foil.

IONE.

Have they past?

PANTHEA.

They have past;
They outspeeded the blast,
While 't is said, they are fled:

IONE.

Whither, oh! whither?

PANTHEA.

To the dark, to the past, to the dead.

VOICE OF UNSEEN SPIRITS.

Bright clouds float in heaven,
Dew-stars gleam on earth,
Waves assemble on ocean,
They are gather'd and driven
By the storm of delight, by the panic of glee!
They shake with emotion,
They dance in their mirth.
But where are ye?

The pine boughs are singing
Old songs with new gladness;
The billows and fountains
Fresh music are flinging,
Like the notes of a spirit from land and from sea;
The storms mock the mountains
With the thunder of gladness.
But where are ye?

IONE.

What charioteers are these?

PANTHEA.

Where are their chariots?

SEMICHORUS OF HOURS.

The voice of the Spirits of Air and of Earth
Have drawn back the figured curtain of sleep
Which cover'd our being and darken'd our birth
In the deep.

A VOICE.

In the deep?

SEMICHORUS II.

Oh! below the deep.

SEMICHORUS I.

A hundred ages we had been kept
Cradled in visions of hate and care,
And each one who waked as his brother slept,
Found the truth—

SEMICHORUS II.

Worse than his visions were!

SEMICHORUS I.

We have heard the lute of Hope in sleep;
We have known the voice of Love in dreams,
We have felt the wand of Power, and leap—

SEMICHORUS II.

As the billows leap in the morning beams!

CHORUS.

Weave the dance on the floor of the breeze,
Pierce with song heaven's silent light,
Enchant the day that too swiftly flees,
To check its flight ere the cave of night.

Once the hungry Hours were hounds
Which chased the day like a bleeding deer,
And it limp'd and stumbled with many wounds
Through the nightly dells of the desert year.

But now, oh! weave the mystic measure
Of music, and dance, and shapes of light,
Let the Hours, and the spirits of might and pleasure,
Like the clouds and sunbeams, unite.

A VOICE.

Unite.

PANTHEA.

See, where the Spirits of the human mind
Wrapt in sweet sounds, as in bright veils, approach.

CHORUS OF SPIRITS.

We join the throng
Of the dance and the song,
By the whirlwind of gladness borne along;
As the flying-fish leap
From the Indian deep,
And mix with the sea-birds, half-asleep.

CHORUS OF HOURS.

Whence come ye, so wild and so fleet,
For sandals of lightning are on your feet,
And your wings are soft and swift as thought,
And your eyes are as love which is veiled not?

CHORUS OF SPIRITS.

We come from the mind
Of human kind,
Which was late so dusk, and obscene, and blind;
Now 't is an ocean
Of clear emotion,
A heaven of serene and mighty motion.

From that deep abyss
Of wonder and bliss,
Whose caverns are crystal palaces;
From those skiey towers
Where Thought's crowned powers
Sit watching your dance, ye happy Hours!

From the dim recesses
Of woven caresses,
Where lovers catch ye by your loose tresses;
From the azure isles,
Where sweet Wisdom smiles,
Delaying your ships with her syren wiles.

From the temples high
Of Man's ear and eye,
Roof'd over Sculpture and Poesy;
From the murmurings
Of the unseal'd springs
Where Science bedews his Dædal wings.

Years after years,
Through blood, and tears,
And a thick hell of hatreds, and hopes, and fears;
We waded and flew,
And the islets were few
Where the bud-blighted flowers of happiness grew.

Our feet now, every palm,
Are sandall'd with calm,
And the dew of our wings is a rain of balm;
And, beyond our eyes,
The human love lies
Which makes all it gazes on Paradise.

CHORUS OF SPIRITS AND HOURS.

Then weave the web of the mystic measure;
From the depths of the sky and the ends of the earth,
Come, swift Spirits of might and of pleasure,
Fill the dance and the music of mirth,
As the waves of a thousand streams rush by
To an ocean of splendour and harmony!

CHORUS OF SPIRITS.

Our spoil is won,
Our task is done,
We are free to dive, or soar, or run;
Beyond and around,
Or within the bound
Which clips the world with darkness round.

We 'll pass the eyes
Of the starry skies
Into the hoar deep to colonize:
Death, Chaos, and Night,
From the sound of our flight,
Shall flee, like mist from a tempest's might.

And Earth, Air, and Light,
And the Spirit of Might,
Which drives round the stars in their fiery flight;
And Love, Thought, and Breath,
The powers that quell Death,
Wherever we soar shall assemble beneath.

And our singing shall build
In the void's loose field
A world for the Spirit of Wisdom to wield;
We will take our plan
From the new world of man,
And our work shall be call'd the Promethean.

CHORUS OF HOURS.

Break the dance, and scatter the song;
Let some depart, and some remain.

SEMICHORUS I.

We, beyond heaven, are driven along:

SEMICHORUS II.

Us the enchantments of earth retain:

SEMICHORUS I.

Ceaseless, and rapid, and fierce, and free,
With the Spirits which build a new earth and sea,
And a heaven where yet heaven could never be.

SEMICHORUS II.

Solemn, and slow, and serene, and bright,
Leading the day and outspeeding the Night,
With the powers of a world of perfect light.

SEMICHORUS I.

We whirl, singing loud, round the gathering sphere,
Till the trees, and the beasts, and the clouds appear
From its chaos made calm by love, not fear.

SEMICHORUS II.

We encircle the ocean and mountains of earth,
And the happy forms of its death and birth
Change to the music of our sweet mirth.

CHORUS OF HOURS AND SPIRITS.

Break the dance, and scatter the song,
Let some depart, and some remain;
Wherever we fly we lead along
In leashes, like star-beams, soft yet strong,
The clouds that are heavy with love's sweet rain.

PANTHEA.

Ha! they are gone!

IONE.

Yet feel you no delight
From the past sweetness?

PANTHEA.

As the bare green hill
When some soft cloud vanishes into rain,
Laughs with a thousand drops of sunny water
To the unpavilion'd sky!

IONE.

Even whilst we speak
New notes arise. What is that awful sound?

PANTHEA.

'T is the deep music of the rolling world,
Kindling within the strings of the waved air
Æolian modulations.

IONE.

Listen too,
How every pause is fill'd with under-notes,
Clear, silver, icy, keen awakening tones,
Which pierce the sense, and live within the soul,
As the sharp stars pierce winter's crystal air
And gaze upon themselves within the sea.

PANTHEA.

But see where, through two openings in the forest
Which hanging branches overcanopy,
And where two runnels of a rivulet,
Between the close moss violet inwoven,
Have made their path of melody, like sisters
Who part with sighs that they may meet in smiles,
Turning their dear disunion to an isle
Of lovely grief, a wood of sweet sad thoughts;
Two visions of strange radiance float upon
The ocean-like enchantment of strong sound,
Which flows intenser, keener, deeper yet
Under the ground and through the windless air.

IONE.

I see a chariot like that thinnest boat
In which the mother of the months is borne
By ebbing night into her western cave,
When she upsprings from interlunar dreams,
O'er which is curved an orblike canopy
Of gentle darkness, and the hills and woods
Distinctly seen through that dusk airy veil,
Regard like shapes in an enchanter's glass;
Its wheels are solid clouds, azure and gold,
Such as the genii of the thunder-storm
Pile on the floor of the illumined sea
When the sun rushes under it; they roll
And move and grow as with an inward wind;
Within it sits a winged infant, white
Its countenance, like the whiteness of bright snow,
Its plumes are as feathers of sunny frost,
Its limbs gleam white, through the wind-flowing folds
Of its white robe, woof of ætherial pearl.
Its hair is white, the brightness of white light
Scatter'd in string; yet its two eyes are heavens
Of liquid darkness, which the Deity

Within seems pouring, as a storm is pour'd
From jagged clouds, out of their arrowy lashes,
Tempering the cold and radiant air around,
With fire that is not brightness; in its hand
It sways a quivering moon-beam, from whose point
A guiding power directs the chariot's prow
Over its wheeled clouds, which as they roll
Over the grass, and flowers, and waves, wake sounds
Sweet as a singing rain of silver dew.

PANTHEA.

And from the other opening in the wood
Rushes, with loud and whirlwind harmony,
A sphere, which is as many thousand spheres,
Solid as crystal, yet through all its mass
Flow, as through empty space, music and light:
Ten thousand orbs involving and involved,
Purple and azure, white, green, and golden,
Sphere within sphere; and every space between
Peopled with unimaginable shapes,
Such as ghosts dream dwell in the lampless deep,
Yet each inter-transpicuous, and they whirl
Over each other with a thousand motions,
Upon a thousand sightless axles spinning,
And with the force of self-destroying swiftness,
Intensely, slowly, solemnly roll on,
Kindling with mingled sounds, and many tones,
Intelligible words and music wild.
With mighty whirl the multitudinous orb
Grinds the bright brook into an azure mist
Of elemental subtlety, like light;
And the wild odour of the forest flowers,
The music of the living grass and air,
The emerald light of leaf-entangled beams
Round its intense yet self-conflicting speed,
Seem kneaded into one aërial mass
Which drowns the sense. Within the orb itself,
Pillow'd upon its alabaster arms,
Like to a child o'erwearied with sweet toil,
On its own folded wings, and wavy hair,
The Spirit of the Earth is laid asleep,
And you can see its little lips are moving,
Amid the changing light of their own smiles,
Like one who talks of what he loves in dream.

IONE.

'T is only mocking the orb's harmony.

PANTHEA.

And from a star upon its forehead, shoot,
Like swords of azure fire, or golden spears
With tyrant-quelling myrtle overtwined,
Embleming heaven and earth united now,
Vast beams like spoke of some invisible wheel
Which whirl as the orb whirls, swifter than thought,
Filling the abyss with sun-like lightnings,
And perpendicular now, and now transverse,
Pierce the dark soil, and as they pierce and pass,
Make bare the secrets of the earth's deep heart;
Infinite mine of adamant and gold,
Valueless stones, and unimagined gems,
And caverns on crystalline columns poured
With vegetable silver overspread;
Wells of unfathom'd fire, and water springs
Whence the great sea, even as a child is fed,
Whose vapours clothe earth's monarch mountain-tops
With kingly, ermine snow. The beams flash on
And make appear the melancholy ruins
Of cancell'd cycles; anchors, beaks of ships;
Planks turn'd to marble; quivers, helms, and spears,
And gorgon-headed targes, and the wheels
Of scythed chariots, and the emblazonry
Of trophies, standards, and armorial beasts,
Round which death laugh'd, sepulchred emblems
Of dead destruction, ruin within ruin!
The wrecks beside of many a city vast,
Whose population which the earth grew over
Was mortal, but not human; see, they lie
Their monstrous works, and uncouth skeletons,
Their statues, homes and fanes; prodigious shapes
Huddled in grey annihilation, split,
Jamm'd in the hard, black deep; and over these,
The anatomies of unknown winged things,
And fishes which were isles of living scale,
And serpents, bony chains, twisted around
The iron crags, or within heaps of dust
To which the tortuous strength of their last pangs
Had crush'd the iron crags; and over these
The jagged alligator, and the might
Of earth-convulsing behemoth, which once
Were monarch beasts, and on the slimy shores,
And weed-overgrown continents of earth,
Increased and multiplied like summer worms
On an abandon'd corpse, till the blue globe
Wrapt deluge round it like a cloke, and they
Yell'd, gasp'd, and were abolish'd; or some God
Whose throne was in a comet, past, and cried,
Be not! And like my words they were no more.

THE EARTH.

The joy, the triumph, the delight, the madness!
The boundless, overflowing, bursting gladness,
The vaporous exultation not to be confined!
Ha! ha! the animation of delight
Which wraps me, like an atmosphere of light,
And bears me as a cloud is borne by its own wind.

THE MOON.

Brother mine, calm wanderer,
Happy globe of land and air,
Some Spirit is darted like a beam from thee,
Which penetrates my frozen frame,
And passes with the warmth of flame,
With love, and odour, and deep melody
Through me, through me!

THE EARTH.

Ha! ha! the caverns of my hollow mountains,
My cloven fire-crags, sound-exulting fountains,
Laugh with a vast and inextinguishable laughter.
The oceans, and the deserts, and the abysses,
And the deep air's unmeasured wildernesses,
Answer from all their clouds and billows, echoing after.

They cry aloud as I do. Sceptred curse,
Who all our green and azure universe
Threaten'dst to muffle round with black destruction, sending
A solid cloud to rain hot thunder-stones,
And splinter and knead down my children's bones,
All I bring forth, to one void mass battering and blending.

Until each crag-like tower, and storied column,
Palace, and obelisk, and temple solemn,

My imperial mountains crown'd with cloud, and snow, and fire;
My sea-like forests, every blade and blossom
Which finds a grave or cradle in my bosom,
Were stamp'd by thy strong hate into a lifeless mire.

How art thou sunk, withdrawn, cover'd, drunk up
By thirsty nothing, as the brackish cup
Drain'd by a desert-troop, a little drop for all;
And from beneath, around, within, above,
Filling thy void annihilation, love
Bursts in like light on caves cloven by thunder-ball.

THE MOON.

The snow upon my lifeless mountains
Is loosen'd into living fountains,
My solid oceans flow, and sing, and shine:
A spirit from my heart bursts forth,
It clothes with unexpected birth
My cold bare bosom: Oh! it must be thine
On mine, on mine!

Gazing on thee I feel, I know
Green stalks burst forth, and bright flowers grow,
And living shapes upon my bosom move:
Music is in the sea and air,
Winged clouds soar here and there,
Dark with the rain new buds are dreaming of:
'T is love, all love!

THE EARTH.

It interpenetrates my granite mass,
Through tangled roots and trodden clay doth pass,
Into the utmost leaves and delicatest flowers;
Upon the winds, among the clouds 't is spread,
It wakes a life in the forgotten dead,
They breathe a spirit up from their obscurest bowers.

And like a storm bursting its cloudy prison
With thunder, and with whirlwind, has arisen
Out of the lampless caves of unimagined being:
With earthquake shock and swiftness making shiver
Thought's stagnant chaos, unremoved for ever,
Till hate, and fear, and pain, light-vanquish'd shadows, fleeing,

Leave Man, who was a many-sided mirror,
Which could distort to many a shape of error,
This true fair world of things, a sea reflecting love;
Which over all his kind, as the sun's heaven
Gliding o'er ocean, smooth, serene, and even
Darting from starry depths radiance and light, doth move,

Leave man, even as a leprous child is left,
Who follows a sick beast to some warm cleft
Of rocks, through which the might of healing springs is pour'd;
Then when it wanders home with rosy smile,
Unconscious, and its mother fears awhile
It is a spirit, then, weeps on her child restored.

Man, oh, not men! a chain of linked thought,
Of love and might to be divided not,
Compelling the elements with adamantine stress;
As the sun rules, even with a tyrant's gaze,
The unquiet republic of the maze
Of planets, struggling fierce towards heaven's free wilderness.

Man, one harmonious soul of many a soul,
Whose nature is its own divine control,
Where all things flow to all, as rivers to the sea;
Familiar acts are beautiful through love;
Labour, and pain, and grief, in life's green grove
Sport like tame beasts, none knew how gentle they could be!

His will, with all mean passions, bad delights,
And selfish cares, its trembling satellites,
A spirit ill to guide, but mighty to obey,
Is as a tempest-winged ship, whose helm
Love rules, through waves which dare not overwhelm,
Forcing life's wildest shores to own its sovereign sway.

All things confess his strength. Through the cold mass
Of marble and of colour his dreams pass;
Bright threads whence mothers weave the robes their children wear;
Language is a perpetual orphic song,
Which rules with Dædal harmony a throng
Of thoughts and forms, which else senseless and shapeless were.

The lightning is his slave; heaven's utmost deep
Gives up her stars, and like a flock of sheep
They pass before his eye, are number'd, and roll on!
The tempest is his steed, he strides the air
And the abyss shouts from her depth laid bare,
Heaven, hast thou secrets? Man unveils me; I have none.

THE MOON.

The shadow of white death has past
From my path in heaven at last,
A clinging shroud of solid frost and sleep;
And through my newly-woven bowers,
Wander happy paramours,
Less mighty, but as mild as those who keep
Thy vales more deep.

THE EARTH.

As the dissolving warmth of dawn may fold
A half infrozen dew-globe, green, and gold,
And crystalline, till it becomes a winged mist,
And wanders up the vault of the blue day,
Outlives the noon, and on the sun's last ray
Hangs o'er the sea, a fleece of fire and amethyst.

THE MOON.

Thou art folded, thou art lying
In the light which is undying
Of thine own joy, and heaven's smile divine;
All suns and constellations shower
On thee a light, a life, a power
Which doth array thy sphere; thou pourest thine
On mine, on mine!

THE EARTH.

I spin beneath my pyramid of night,
Which points into the heavens dreaming delight,
Murmuring victorious joy in my enchanted sleep;
As a youth lull'd in love-dreams faintly sighing,
Under the shadow of his beauty lying,
Which round his rest a watch of light and warmth doth keep.

THE MOON.

As in the soft and sweet eclipse,
When soul meets soul on lovers' lips,
High hearts are calm, and brightest eyes are dull;
So when thy shadow falls on me,
Then am I mute and still, by thee
Cover'd; of thy love, Orb most beautiful,
Full, oh! too full!

Thou art speeding round the sun
Brightest world of many a one;
Green and azure sphere which shinest
With a light which is divinest
Among all the lamps of Heaven
To whom life and light is given;
I, thy crystal paramour
Borne beside thee by a power
Like the polar Paradise,
Magnet-like, of lovers' eyes;
I, a most enamour'd maiden,
Whose weak brain is overladen
With the pleasure of her love,
Maniac-like around thee move
Gazing, an insatiate bride,
On thy form from every side
Like a Mænad, round the cup
Which Agave lifted up
In the wierd Cadmæan forest.
Brother, wheresoe'er thou soarest
I must hurry, whirl and follow
Through the heavens wide and hollow,
Sheltered by the warm embrace
Of thy soul from hungry space,
Drinking from thy sense and sight
Beauty, majesty, and might,
As a lover or a cameleon
Grows like what it looks upon,
As a violet's gentle eye
Gazes on the azure sky
Until its hue grows like what it beholds,
As a grey and watery mist
Glows like solid amethyst
Athwart the western mountain it enfolds,
When the sunset sleeps
Upon its snow.

THE EARTH.

And the weak day weeps
That it should be so.
Oh, gentle Moon! the voice of thy delight
Falls on me like thy clear and tender light
Soothing the seaman, borne the summer night,
Through isles for ever calm;
Oh, gentle Moon! thy crystal accents pierce
The caverns of my pride's deep universe,
Charming the tiger joy, whose tramplings fierce
Made wounds which need thy balm.

PANTHEA.

I rise as from a bath of sparkling water,
A bath of azure light, among dark rocks,
Out of the stream of sound.

IONE.

Ah me! sweet sister,
The stream of sound has ebb'd away from us,
And you pretend to rise out of its wave,
Because your words fall like the clear, soft dew
Shaken from a bathing wood-nymph's limbs and hair.

PANTHEA.

Peace! peace! A mighty Power, which is as darkness,
Is rising out of Earth, and from the sky
Is shower'd like night, and from within the air
Bursts, like eclipse which had been gather'd up
Into the pores of sunlight: the bright visions,
Wherein the singing spirits rode and shone,
Gleam like pale meteors through a watery night.

IONE.

There is a sense of words upon mine ear.

PANTHEA.

A universal sound like words: Oh, list!

DEMOGORGON.

Thou, Earth, calm empire of a happy soul!
Sphere of divinest shapes and harmonics,
Beautiful orb! gathering as thou dost roll
The love which paves thy path along the skies:

THE EARTH.

I hear: I am as a drop of dew that dies.

DEMOGORGON.

Thou, Moon, which gazest on the nightly Earth
With wonder, as it gazes upon thee;
Whilst each to men, and beasts, and the swift birth
Of birds, is beauty, love, calm, harmony:

THE MOON.

I hear: I am a leaf shaken by thee!

DEMOGORGON.

Ye kings of suns and stars! Dæmons and Gods,
Ætherial Dominations! who possess
Elysian, windless, fortunate abodes
Beyond Heaven's constellated wilderness:

A VOICE FROM ABOVE.

Our great Republic hears, we are blest, and bless.

DEMOGORGON.

Ye happy dead! whom beams of brightest verse
Are clouds to hide, not colours to pourtray,
Whether your nature is that universe
Which once ye saw and suffer'd—

A VOICE FROM BENEATH.

Or as they
Whom we have left, we change and pass away.

DEMOGORGON.

Ye elemental Genii, who have homes
From man's high mind even to the central stone
Of sullen lead; from Heaven's star-fretted domes
To the dull weed some sea-worm battens on:

A CONFUSED VOICE.

We hear: thy words waken Oblivion.

DEMOGORGON.

Spirits! whose homes are flesh; ye beasts and birds,
Ye worms, and fish; ye living leaves and buds;
Lightning and wind; and ye untameable herds,
Meteors and mists, which throng air's solitudes:

A VOICE.

Thy voice to us is wind among still woods.

DEMOGORGON.

Man, who wert once a despot and a slave;
A dupe and a deceiver; a decay;
A traveller from the cradle to the grave,
Through the dim night of this immortal day:

ALL.

Speak! thy strong words may never pass away.

DEMOGORGON.

This is the day, which down the void abysm
At the Earth-born's spell yawns for Heaven's despotism,
And Conquest is dragg'd captive through the deep;
Love, from its awful throne of patient power
In the wise heart, from the last giddy hour
Of dead endurance, from the slippery, steep,
And narrow verge of crag-like agony, springs
And folds over the world its healing wings.

Gentleness, Virtue, Wisdom, and Endurance,
These are the seals of that most firm assurance
Which bars the pit over Destruction's strength;
And if, with infirm hand, Eternity,
Mother of many acts and hours, should free
The serpent that would clasp her with his length;
These are the spells by which to re-assume
An empire o'er the disentangled doom.

To suffer woes which Hope thinks infinite;
To forgive wrongs darker than death or night;
To defy Power, which seems omnipotent;
To love, and bear; to hope till Hope creates
From its own wreck the thing it contemplates;
Neither to change, nor flatter, nor repent;
This, like thy glory, Titan! is to be
Good, great and joyous, beautiful and free;
This is alone Life, Joy, Empire, and Victory.

Queen Mab.

I.

How wonderful is Death,
Death and his brother Sleep!
One, pale as yonder waning moon,
With lips of lurid blue;
The other, rosy as the morn
When, throned on ocean's wave,
It blushes o'er the world:
Yet both so passing wonderful!

Hath then the gloomy Power
Whose reign is in the tainted sepulchres
Seized on her sinless soul?
Must then that peerless form
Which love and admiration cannot view
Without a beating heart, those azure veins
Which steal like streams along a field of snow,
That lovely outline, which is fair
As breathing marble, perish?
Must putrefaction's breath
Leave nothing of this heavenly sight
But loathsomeness and ruin?
Spare nothing but a gloomy theme,
On which the lightest heart might moralize?
Or is it only a sweet slumber
Stealing o'er sensation,
Which the breath of roseate morning
Chaseth into darkness?
Will Ianthe wake again,
And give that faithful bosom joy
Whose sleepless spirit waits to catch
Light, life and rapture from her smile?

Yes! she will wake again,
Although her glowing limbs are motionless,
And silent those sweet lips,
Once breathing eloquence,
That might have soothed a tiger's rage,
Or thaw'd the cold heart of a conqueror.
Her dewy eyes are closed,
And on their lids, whose texture fine
Scarce hides the dark blue orbs beneath,
The baby Sleep is pillow'd:
Her golden tresses shade
The bosom's stainless pride,
Curling like tendrils of the parasite
Around a marble column.

Hark! whence that rushing sound?
'T is like the wondrous strain
That round a lonely ruin swells,
Which, wandering on the echoing shore,
The enthusiast hears at evening:
'T is softer than the west wind's sigh;
'T is wilder than the unmeasured notes
Of that strange lyre whose strings
The genii of the breezes sweep:
Those lines of rainbow light
Are like the moonbeams when they fall
Through some cathedral window, but the teints
Are such as may not find
Comparison on earth.

Behold the chariot of the Fairy Queen!
Celestial coursers paw the unyielding air;
Their filmy pennons at her word they furl,
And stop obedient to the reins of light:
These the Queen of spells drew in,
She spread a charm around the spot,
And leaning graceful from the etherial car,
Long did she gaze, and silently,
Upon the slumbering maid.

Oh! not the vision'd poet in his dreams,
When silvery clouds float through the wilder'd brain,
When every sight of lovely, wild and grand,
Astonishes, enraptures, elevates,
When fancy at a glance combines

The wondrous and the beautiful,—
So bright, so fair, so wild a shape
Hath ever yet beheld,
As that which rein'd the coursers of the air,
And pour'd the magic of her gaze
Upon the maiden's sleep.

The broad and yellow moon
Shone dimly through her form—
That form of faultless symmetry;
The pearly and pellucid car
Moved not the moonlight's line:
'T was not an earthly pageant;
Those who had look'd upon the sight,
Passing all human glory,
Saw not the yellow moon,
Saw not the mortal scene,
Heard not the night-wind's rush,
Heard not an earthly sound,
Saw but the fairy pageant,
Heard but the heavenly strains
That fill'd the lonely dwelling.

The Fairy's frame was slight: yon fibrous cloud
That catches but the palest tinge of even,
And which the straining eye can hardly seize
When melting into eastern twilight's shadow,
Were scarce so thin, so slight; but the fair star
That gems the glittering coronet of morn,
Sheds not a light so mild, so powerful,
As that which, bursting from the Fairy's form,
Spread a purpureal halo round the scene,
Yet with an undulating motion,
Sway'd to her outline gracefully.

From her celestial car
The Fairy Queen descended,
And thrice she waved her wand
Circled with wreaths of amaranth:
Her thin and misty form
Moved with the moving air,
And the clear silver tones,
As thus she spoke, were such
As are unheard by all but gifted ear.

FAIRY.

Stars! your balmiest influence shed!
Elements! your wrath suspend!
Sleep, Ocean, in the rocky bounds
That circle thy domain!
Let not a breath be seen to stir
Around yon grass-grown ruin's height,
Let even the restless gossamer
Sleep on the moveless air!
Soul of Ianthe! thou,
Judged alone worthy of the envied boon
That waits the good and the sincere; that waits
Those who have struggled, and with resolute will
Vanquish'd earth's pride and meanness, burst the chains,
The icy chains of custom, and have shone
The day-stars of their age:—Soul of Ianthe!
Awake! arise!

Sudden arose
Ianthe's Soul; it stood
All beautiful in naked purity,
The perfect semblance of its bodily frame.
Instinct with inexpressible beauty and grace,
Each stain of earthliness
Had pass'd away, it reassumed
Its native dignity, and stood
Immortal amid ruin.

Upon the couch the body lay
Wrapt in the depth of slumber:
Its features were fix'd and meaningless,
Yet animal life was there,
And every organ yet perform'd
Its natural functions: 't was a sight
Of wonder to behold the body and soul.
The self-same lineaments, the same
Marks of identity were there;
Yet, oh how different! One aspires to Heaven,
Pants for its sempiternal heritage,
And ever-changing, ever-rising still,
Wantons in endless being.
The other, for a time the unwilling sport
Of circumstance and passion, struggles on;
Fleets through its sad duration rapidly;
Then like a useless and worn-out machine,
Rots, perishes, and passes.

FAIRY.

Spirit! who hast dived so deep;
Spirit! who hast soar'd so high;
Thou the fearless, thou the mild,
Accept the boon thy worth hath earn'd,
Ascend the car with me.

SPIRIT.

Do I dream? is this new feeling
But a vision'd ghost of slumber?
If indeed I am a soul,
A free, a disembodied soul,
Speak again to me.

FAIRY.

I am the Fairy MAB: to me 't is given
The wonders of the human world to keep;
The secrets of the immeasurable past,
In the unfailing consciences of men,
Those stern, unflattering chroniclers, I find:
The future, from the causes which arise
In each event, I gather: not the sting
Which retributive memory implants
In the hard bosom of the selfish man;
Nor that ecstatic and exulting throb
Which virtue's votary feels when he sums up
The thoughts and actions of a well-spent day,
Are unforeseen, unregister'd by me:
And it is yet permitted me, to rend
The veil of mortal frailty, that the spirit
Clothed in its changeless purity, may know
How soonest to accomplish the great end
For which it hath its being, and may taste
That peace, which in the end all life will share.
This is the meed of virtue; happy Soul,
Ascend the car with me!

The chains of earth's immurement
Fell from Ianthe's spirit;
They shrank and brake like bandages of straw

Beneath a waken'd giant's strength.
She knew her glorious change,
And felt in apprehension uncontroll'd
New raptures opening round:
Each day-dream of her mortal life,
Each frenzied vision of the slumbers
That closed each well-spent day,
Seem'd now to meet reality.

The Fairy and the Soul proceeded;
The silver clouds disparted;
And as the car of magic they ascended,
Again the speechless music swell'd,
Again the coursers of the air
Unfurl'd their azure pennons, and the Queen,
Shaking the beamy reins,
Bade them pursue their way.

The magic car moved on.
The night was fair, and countless stars
Studded heaven's dark blue vault,—
Just o'er the eastern wave
Peep'd the first faint smile of morn:—
The magic car moved on—
From the celestial hoofs
The atmosphere in flaming sparkles flew,
And where the burning wheels
Eddied above the mountain's loftiest peak,
Was traced a line of lightning.
Now it flew far above a rock,
The utmost verge of earth,
The rival of the Andes, whose dark brow
Lower'd o'er the silver sea.

Far, far below the chariot's path,
Calm as a slumbering babe,
Tremendous Ocean lay.
The mirror of its stillness show'd
The pale and waning stars,
The chariot's fiery track,
And the grey light of morn
Tinging those fleecy clouds
That canopied the dawn.
Seem'd it, that the chariot's way
Lay through the midst of an immense concave,
Radiant with million constellations, tinged
With shades of infinite colour,
And semicircled with a belt
Flashing incessant meteors.

The magic car moved on.
As they approach'd their goal
The coursers seem'd to gather speed;
The sea no longer was distinguish'd; earth
Appear'd a vast and shadowy sphere;
The sun's unclouded orb
Roll'd through the black concave; (1)
Its rays of rapid light
Parted around the chariot's swifter course,
And fell, like ocean's feathery spray
Dash'd from the boiling surge
Before a vessel's prow.

The magic car moved on.
Earth's distant orb appear'd
The smallest light that twinkles in the heaven;
Whilst round the chariot's way
Innumerable systems roll'd, (2)
And countless spheres diffused
An ever-varying glory.
It was a sight of wonder: some
Were horned like the crescent moon;
Some shed a mild and silver beam
Like Hesperus o'er the western sea;
Some dash'd athwart with trains of flame,
Like worlds to death and ruin driven;
Some shone like suns, and as the chariot pass'd,
Eclipsed all other light.

Spirit of Nature! here!
In this interminable wilderness
Of worlds, at whose immensity
Even soaring fancy staggers,
Here is thy fitting temple.
Yet not the slightest leaf
That quivers to the passing breeze
Is less instinct with thee:
Yet not the meanest worm
That lurks in graves and fattens on the dead
Less shares thy eternal breath.
Spirit of Nature! thou!
Imperishable as this scene,
Here is thy fitting temple.

II.

If solitude hath ever led thy steps
To the wild ocean's echoing shore,
And thou hast linger'd there,
Until the sun's broad orb
Seem'd resting on the burnish'd wave,
Thou must have mark'd the lines
Of purple gold, that motionless
Hung o'er the sinking sphere:
Thou must have mark'd the billowy clouds
Edged with intolerable radiancy,
Towering like rocks of jet
Crown'd with a diamond wreath.
And yet there is a moment,
When the sun's highest point
Peeps like a star o'er ocean's western edge,
When those far clouds of feathery gold,
Shaded with deepest purple, gleam
Like islands on a dark blue sea;
Then has thy fancy soar'd above the earth,
And furl'd its wearied wing
Within the Fairy's fane.

Yet not the golden islands
Gleaming in yon flood of light,
Nor the feathery curtains
Stretching o'er the sun's bright couch,
Nor the burnish'd ocean waves
Paving that gorgeous dome,
So fair, so wonderful a sight
As Mab's etherial palace could afford.
Yet likest evening's vault, that faery Hall!
As Heaven, low resting on the wave, it spread
Its floors of flashing light,
Its vast and azure dome,
Its fertile golden islands
Floating on a silver sea;

Whilst suns their mingling beamings darted
Through clouds of circumambient darkness,
And pearly battlements around
Look'd o'er the immense of Heaven.

The magic car no longer moved.
The Fairy and the Spirit
Enter'd the Hall of Spells:
Those golden clouds
That roll'd in glittering billows
Beneath the azure canopy
With the etherial footsteps, trembled not:
The light and crimson mists,
Floating to strains of thrilling melody
Through that unearthly dwelling,
Yielded to every movement of the will.
Upon their pensive spell the spirit lean'd,
And, for the varied bliss that press'd around,
Used not the glorious privilege
Of virtue and of wisdom.

Spirit! the Fairy said,
And pointed to the gorgeous dome,
This is a wondrous sight
And mocks all human grandeur;
But, were it virtue's only meed, to dwell
In a celestial palace, all resign'd
To pleasurable impulses, immured
Within the prison of itself, the will
Of changeless nature would be unfulfill'd.
Learn to make others happy. Spirit, come!
This is thine high reward:—the past shall rise;
Thou shalt behold the present; I will teach
The secrets of the future.

The Fairy and the Spirit
Approach'd the overhanging battlement.—
Below lay stretch'd the universe!
There, far as the remotest line
That bounds imagination's flight,
Countless and unending orbs
In mazy motion intermingled,
Yet still fulfill'd immutably
Eternal nature's law.
Above, below, around
The circling systems form'd
A wilderness of harmony;
Each with undeviating aim,
In eloquent silence, through the depths of space
Pursued its wondrous way.

There was a little light
That twinkled in the misty distance:
None but a spirit's eye
Might ken that rolling orb;
None but a spirit's eye,
And in no other place
But that celestial dwelling, might behold
Each action of this earth's inhabitants.
But matter, space and time,
In those aërial mansions cease to act;
And all-prevailing wisdom, when it reaps
The harvest of its excellence, o'erbounds
Those obstacles, of which an earthly soul
Fears to attempt the conquest.

The Fairy pointed to the earth.
The Spirit's intellectual eye
Its kindred beings recognized.
The thronging thousands, to a passing view,
Seem'd like an ant-hill's citizens.
How wonderful! that even
The passions, prejudices, interests,
That sway the meanest being, the weak touch
That moves the finest nerve,
And in one human brain
Causes the faintest thought, becomes a link
In the great chain of nature.

Behold, the Fairy cried,
Palmyra's ruin'd palaces!—
Behold! where grandeur frown'd;
Behold! where pleasure smiled;
What now remains?—the memory
Of senselessness and shame—
What is immortal there?
Nothing—it stands to tell
A melancholy tale, to give
An awful warning: soon
Oblivion will steal silently
The remnant of its fame.
Monarchs and conquerors there
Proud o'er prostrate millions trod—
The earthquakes of the human race;
Like them, forgotten when the ruin
That marks their shock is past.

Beside the eternal Nile
The Pyramids have risen.
Nile shall pursue his changeless way:
Those pyramids shall fall;
Yea! not a stone shall stand to tell
The spot whereon they stood;
Their very scite shall be forgotten,
As is their builder's name!

Behold yon sterile spot;
Where now the wandering Arab's tent
Flaps in the desert-blast.
There once old Salem's haughty fane
Rear'd high to heaven its thousand golden domes,
And in the blushing face of day
Exposed its shameful glory.

Oh! many a widow, many an orphan cursed
The building of that fane; and many a father,
Worn out with toil and slavery, implored
The poor man's God to sweep it from the earth,
And spare his children the detested task
Of piling stone on stone, and poisoning
The choicest days of life,
To soothe a dotard's vanity.
There an inhuman and uncultured race
Howl'd hideous praises to their Demon-God;
They rush'd to war, tore from the mother's womb
The unborn child,—old age and infancy
Promiscuous perish'd; their victorious arms
Left not a soul to breathe. Oh! they were fiends:
But what was he who taught them that the God
Of nature and benevolence had given
A special sanction to the trade of blood?
His name and theirs are fading, and the tales

Of this barbarian nation, which imposture
Recites till terror credits, are pursuing
Itself into forgetfulness.

Where Athens, Rome, and Sparta stood,
There is a moral desert now:
The mean and miserable huts,
The yet more wretched palaces,
Contrasted with those ancient fanes,
Now crumbling to oblivion;
The long and lonely colonnades,
Through which the ghost of Freedom stalks,
Seem like a well-known tune,
Which, in some dear scene we have loved to hear,
Remember'd now in sadness.
But, oh! how much more changed,
How gloomier is the contrast
Of human nature there!
Where Socrates expired, a tyrant's slave,
A coward and a fool, spreads death around—
Then, shuddering, meets his own.
Where Cicero and Antoninus lived,
A cowl'd and hypocritical monk
Prays, curses and deceives.

Spirit! ten thousand years
Have scarcely past away,
Since, in the waste where now the savage drinks
His enemy's blood, and aping Europe's sons,
Wakes the unholy song of war,
Arose a stately city,
Metropolis of the western continent:
There, now, the mossy column-stone,
Indented by time's unrelaxing grasp,
Which once appear'd to brave
All, save its country's ruin;
There the wide forest scene,
Rude in the uncultivated loveliness
Of gardens long run wild,
Seems, to the unwilling sojourner, whose steps
Chance in that desert has delay'd,
Thus to have stood since earth was what it is.
Yet once it was the busiest haunt,
Whither, as to a common centre, flock'd
Strangers, and ships, and merchandize:
Once peace and freedom blest
The cultivated plain:
But wealth, that curse of man,
Blighted the bud of its prosperity:
Virtue and wisdom, truth and liberty,
Fled, to return not, until man shall know
That they alone can give the bliss
Worthy a soul that claims
Its kindred with eternity.

There 's not one atom of yon earth
But once was living man;
Nor the minutest drop of rain,
That hangeth in its thinnest cloud,
But flow'd in human veins:
And from the burning plains
Where Lybian monsters yell,
From the most gloomy glens
Of Greenland's sunless clime,
To where the golden fields
Of fertile England spread
Their harvest to the day,
Thou canst not find one spot
Whereon no city stood.

How strange is human pride!
I tell thee that those living things,
To whom the fragile blade of grass,
That springeth in the morn
And perisheth ere noon,
Is an unbounded world;
I tell thee that those viewless beings,
Whose mansion is the smallest particle
Of the impassive atmosphere,
Think, feel and live like man;
That their affections and antipathies,
Like his, produce the laws
Ruling their moral state;
And the minutest throb
That through their frame diffuses
The slightest, faintest motion,
Is fix'd and indispensable
As the majestic laws
That rule yon rolling orbs.

The Fairy paused. The Spirit,
In ecstacy of admiration, felt
All knowledge of the past revived; the events
Of old and wondrous times,
Which dim tradition interruptedly
Teaches the credulous vulgar, were unfolded
In just perspective to the view;
Yet dim from their infinitude.
The Spirit seemed to stand
High on an isolated pinnacle;
The flood of ages combating below,
The depth of the unbounded universe
Above, and all around
Nature's unchanging harmony.

III.

Fairy! the Spirit said,
And on the Queen of spells
Fix'd her etherial eyes,
I thank thee. Thou hast given
A boon which I will not resign, and taught
A lesson not to be unlearn'd. I know
The past, and thence I will essay to glean
A warning for the future, so that man
May profit by his errors, and derive
Experience from his folly:
For, when the power of imparting joy
Is equal to the will, the human soul
Requires no other heaven.

MAB.

Turn thee, surpassing Spirit!
Much yet remains unscann'd.
Thou knowest how great is man,
Thou knowest his imbecility:
Yet learn thou what he is;
Yet learn the lofty destiny
Which restless Time prepares
For every living soul.

Behold a gorgeous palace, that, amid
Yon populous city, rears its thousand towers

And seems itself a city. Gloomy troops
Of centinels, in stern and silent ranks,
Encompass it around: the dweller there
Cannot be free and happy; hearest thou not
The curses of the fatherless, the groans
Of those who have no friend? He passes on:
The King, the wearer of a gilded chain
That binds his soul to abjectness, the fool
Whom courtiers nickname monarch, whilst a slave
Even to the basest appetites—that man
Heeds not the shriek of penury; he smiles
At the deep curses which the destitute
Mutter in secret, and a sullen joy
Pervades his bloodless heart when thousands groan
But for those morsels which his wantonness
Wastes in unjoyous revelry, to save
All that they love from famine: when he hears
The tale of horror, to some ready-made face
Of hypocritical assent he turns,
Smothering the glow of shame, that, spite of him,
Flushes his bloated cheek.

Now to the meal
Of silence, grandeur, and excess, he drags
His pall'd unwilling appetite. If gold,
Gleaming around, and numerous viands cull'd
From every clime, could force the loathing sense
To overcome satiety,—if wealth
The spring it draws from poisons not,—or vice,
Unfeeling, stubborn vice, converteth not
Its food to deadliest venom; then that king
Is happy; and the peasant who fulfills
His unforced task, when he returns at even,
And by the blazing faggot meets again
Her welcome for whom all his toil is sped,
Tastes not a sweeter meal.

Behold him now
Stretch'd on the gorgeous couch; his fever'd brain
Reels dizzily awhile: but ah! too soon
The slumber of intemperance subsides,
And conscience, that undying serpent, calls
Her venomous brood to their nocturnal task.
Listen! he speaks! oh! mark that frenzied eye—
Oh! mark that deadly visage.

KING.

No cessation!
Oh! must this last for ever! Awful death,
I wish, yet fear to clasp thee!—Not one moment
Of dreamless sleep! O dear and blessed peace!
Why dost thou shroud thy vestal purity
In penury and dungeons? wherefore lurkest
With danger, death, and solitude; yet shunn'st
The palace I have built thee! Sacred peace!
Oh visit me but once, but pitying shed
One drop of balm upon my wither'd soul.
Vain man! that palace is the virtuous heart,
And peace defileth not her snowy robes
In such a shed as thine. Hark! yet he mutters;
His slumbers are but varied agonies,
They prey like scorpions on the springs of life.
There needeth not the hell that bigots frame
To punish those who err: earth in itself
Contains at once the evil and the cure;
And all-sufficing nature can chastise
Those who transgress her law,—she only knows
How justly to proportion to the fault
The punishment it merits.

Is it strange
That this poor wretch should pride him in his woe?
Take pleasure in his abjectness, and hug
The scorpion that consumes him? Is it strange
That, placed on a conspicuous throne of thorns,
Grasping an iron sceptre, and immured
Within a splendid prison, whose stern bounds
Shut him from all that's good or dear on earth,
His soul asserts not its humanity?
That man's mild nature rises not in war
Against a king's employ? No—'tis not strange.
He, like the vulgar, thinks, feels, acts and lives
Just as his father did; the unconquer'd powers
Of precedent and custom interpose
Between a *king* and virtue. Stranger yet,
To those who know not nature, nor deduce
The future from the present, it may seem,
That not one slave, who suffers from the crimes
Of this unnatural being; not one wretch,
Whose children famish, and whose nuptial bed
Is earth's unpitying bosom, rears an arm
To dash him from his throne!

Those gilded flies
That, basking in the sunshine of a court,
Fatten on its corruption!—what are they?
—The drones of the community; they feed
On the mechanic's labour: the starved hind
For them compels the stubborn glebe to yield
Its unshared harvests; and yon squalid form,
Leaner than fleshless misery, that wastes
A sunless life in the unwholesome mine,
Drags out in labour a protracted death,
To glut their grandeur; many faint with toil,
That few may know the cares and woe of sloth.

Whence, thinkest thou, kings and parasites arose?
Whence that unnatural line of drones, who heap
Toil and unvanquishable penury
On those who build their palaces, and bring
Their daily bread?—From vice, black loathsome vice;
From rapine, madness, treachery, and wrong;
From all that genders misery, and makes
Of earth this thorny wilderness; from lust,
Revenge, and murder.—And when reason's voice,
Loud as the voice of nature, shall have waked
The nations; and mankind perceive that vice
Is discord, war, and misery; that virtue
Is peace, and happiness and harmony;
When man's maturer nature shall disdain
The playthings of its childhood;—kingly glare
Will lose its power to dazzle; its authority
Will silently pass by; the gorgeous throne
Shall stand unnoticed in the regal hall,
Fast falling to decay; whilst falsehood's trade
Shall be as hateful and unprofitable
As that of truth is now.

Where is the fame
Which the vain-glorious mighty of the earth
Seek to eternize? Oh! the faintest sound
From time's light footfall, the minutest wave

That swells the flood of ages, whelms in nothing
The unsubstantial bubble. Aye! to-day
Stern is the tyrant's mandate, red the gaze
That flashes desolation, strong the arm
That scatters multitudes. To-morrow comes!
That mandate is a thunder-peal that died
In ages past; that gaze, a transient flash
On which the midnight closed, and on that arm
The worm has made his meal.

The virtuous man,
Who, great in his humility, as kings
Are little in their grandeur; he who leads
Invincibly a life of resolute good,
And stands amid the silent dungeon-depths
More free and fearless than the trembling judge,
Who, clothed in venal power, vainly strove
To bind the impassive spirit;—when he falls,
His mild eye beams benevolent no more:
Wither'd the hand outstretch'd but to relieve;
Sunk reason's simple eloquence, that roll'd
But to appal the guilty. Yes! the grave
Hath quench'd that eye, and death's relentless frost
Wither'd that arm: but the unfading fame
Which virtue hangs upon its votary's tomb;
The deathless memory of that man, whom kings
Call to their mind and tremble; the remembrance
With which the happy spirit contemplates
Its well-spent pilgrimage on earth,
Shall never pass away.

Nature rejects the monarch, not the man;
The subject, not the citizen: for kings
And subjects, mutual foes, for ever play
A losing game into each other's hands,
Whose stakes are vice and misery. The man
Of virtuous soul commands not nor obeys.
Power, like a desolating pestilence,
Pollutes whate'er it touches; and obedience,
Bane of all genius, virtue, freedom, truth,
Makes slaves of men, and of the human frame
A mechanized automaton.

When Nero,
High over flaming Rome, with savage joy
Lower'd like a fiend, drank with enraptured ear
The shrieks of agonizing death, beheld
The frightful desolation spread, and felt
A new created sense within his soul
Thrill to the sight, and vibrate to the sound;
Thinkest thou his grandeur had not overcome
The force of human kindness? and, when Rome,
With one stern blow, hurl'd not the tyrant down,
Crush'd not the arm red with her dearest blood,
Had not submissive abjectness destroy'd
Nature's suggestions?

Look on yonder earth:
The golden harvests spring; the unfailing sun
Sheds light and life; the fruits, the flowers, the trees,
Arise in due succession; all things speak
Peace, harmony, and love. The universe,
In nature's silent eloquence, declares
That all fulfil the works of love and joy,—
All but the outcast man. He fabricates
The sword which stabs his peace; he cherisheth
The snakes that gnaw his heart; he raiseth up
The tyrant, whose delight is in his woe,
Whose sport is in his agony. Yon sun,
Lights it the great alone? Yon silver beams,
Sleep they less sweetly on the cottage thatch,
Than on the dome of kings? Is mother earth
A step-dame to her numerous sons, who earn
Her unshared gifts with unremitting toil;
A mother only to those puling babes
Who, nursed in ease and luxury, make men
The playthings of their babyhood, and mar,
In self-important childishness, that peace
Which men alone appreciate?

Spirit of Nature! no,
The pure diffusion of thy essence throbs
Alike in every human heart.
Thou, aye, erectest there
Thy throne of power unappealable:
Thou art the judge beneath whose nod
Man's brief and frail authority
Is powerless as the wind
That passeth idly by.
Thine the tribunal which surpasseth
The show of human justice,
As God surpasses man.

Spirit of Nature! thou
Life of interminable multitudes;
Soul of those mighty spheres
Whose changeless paths through Heaven's deep silence lie;
Soul of that smallest thing,
The dwelling of whose life
Is one faint April sun-gleam;—
Man, like these passive things,
Thy will unconsciously fulfilleth:
Like theirs, his age of endless peace,
Which time is fast maturing,
Will swiftly, surely come;
And the unbounded frame, which thou pervadest,
Will be without a flaw
Marring its perfect symmetry.

IV.

How beautiful this night! the balmiest sigh,
Which vernal zephyrs breathe in evening's ear,
Were discord to the speaking quietude
That wraps this moveless scene. Heaven's ebon vault,
Studded with stars unutterably bright,
Through which the moon's unclouded grandeur rolls,
Seems like a canopy which love had spread
To curtain her sleeping world. Yon gentle hills,
Robed in a garment of untrodden snow;
Yon darksome rocks, whence icicles depend,
So stainless, that their white and glittering spires
Tinge not the moon's pure beam; yon castled steep,
Whose banner hangeth o'er the time-worn tower
So idly, that rapt fancy deemeth it
A metaphor of peace;—all form a scene
Where musing solitude might love to lift
Her soul above this sphere of earthliness;
Where silence undisturb'd might watch alone,
So cold, so bright, so still.

The orb of day,
In southern climes, o'er ocean's wavelcss field
Sinks sweetly smiling: not the faintest breath
Steals o'er the unruffled deep; the clouds of eve
Reflect unmoved the lingering beam of day;
And Vesper's image on the western main
Is beautifully still. To-morrow comes:
Cloud upon cloud, in dark and deepening mass,
Roll o'er the blacken'd waters; the deep roar
Of distant thunder mutters awfully;
Tempest unfolds its pinion o'er the gloom
That shrouds the boiling surge; the pitiless fiend,
With all his winds and lightnings, tracks his prey;
The torn deep yawns,—the vessel finds a grave
Beneath its jagged gulf.

Ah! whence yon glare
That fires the arch of heaven?—that dark red smoke
Blotting the silver moon? The stars are quench'd
In darkness, and the pure and spangling snow
Gleams faintly through the gloom that gathers round!
Hark to that roar, whose swift and deaf ning peals
In countless echoes through the mountains ring,
Startling pale midnight on her starry throne!
Now swells the intermingling din; the jar
Frequent and frightful of the bursting bomb;
The falling beam, the shriek, the groan, the shout,
The ceaseless clangor, and the rush of men
Inebriate with rage:—loud, and more loud
The discord grows; till pale death shuts the scene,
And o'er the conqueror and the conquer'd draws
His cold and bloody shroud.—Of all the men
Whom day's departing beam saw blooming there,
In proud and vigorous health; of all the hearts
That beat with anxious life at sun-set there;
How few survive, how few are beating now!
All is deep silence, like the fearful calm
That slumbers in the storm's portentous pause;
Save when the frantic wail of widow'd love
Comes shuddering on the blast, or the faint moan
With which some soul bursts from the frame of clay
Wrapt round its struggling powers.

The grey morn
Dawns on the mournful scene! the sulphurous smoke
Before the icy wind slow rolls away.
And the bright beams of frosty morning dance
Along the spangling snow. There tracks of blood
Even to the forest's depth, and scatter'd arms,
And lifeless warriors, whose hard lineaments
Death's self could change not, mark the dreadful path
Of the outsallying victors: far behind,
Black ashes note where their proud city stood.
Within yon forest is a gloomy glen—
Each tree which guards its darkness from the day,
Waves o'er a warrior's tomb.

I see thee shrink,
Surpassing Spirit!—wert thou human else?
I see a shade of doubt and horror fleet
Across thy stainless features: yet fear not;
This is no unconnected misery,
Nor stands uncaused, and irretrievable.
Man's evil nature, that apology
Which kings who rule, and cowards who crouch, set up
For their unnumber'd crimes, sheds not the blood
Which desolates the discord-wasted land.
From kings, and priests, and statesmen, war arose,
Whose safety is man's deep unbetter'd woe,
Whose grandeur his debasement. Let the axe
Strike at the root, the poison-tree will fall;
And where its venom'd exhalations spread
Ruin, and death, and woe, where millions lay
Quenching the serpent's famine, and their bones
Bleaching unburied in the putrid blast,
A garden shall arise, in lovcliness
Surpassing fabled Eden.

Hath Nature's soul,
That form'd this world so beautiful, that spread
Earth's lap with plenty, and life's smallest chord
Strung to unchanging unison, that gave
The happy birds their dwelling in the grove,
That yielded to the wanderers of the deep
The lovely silence of the unfathom'd main,
And fill'd the meanest worm that crawls in dust
With spirit, thought, and love; On Man alone,
Partial in causeless malice, wantonly
Heap'd ruin, vice, and slavery; his soul
Blasted with withering curses; placed afar
The meteor-happiness, that shuns his grasp,
But serving on the frightful gulf to glare,
Rent wide beneath his footsteps?

Nature!—no!
Kings, priests, and statesmen, blast the human flower
Even in its tender bud; their influence darts
Like subtle poison through the bloodless veins
Of desolate society. The child,
Ere he can lisp his mother's sacred name,
Swells with the unnatural pride of crime, and lifts
His baby-sword even in a hero's mood.
This infant-arm becomes the bloodiest scourge
Of devastated earth; whilst specious names,
Learnt in soft childhood's unsuspecting hour,
Serve as the sophisms with which manhood dims
Bright reason's ray, and sanctifies the sword
Upraised to shed a brother's innocent blood.
Let priest-led slaves cease to proclaim that man
Inherits vice and misery, when force
And falsehood hang even o'er the cradled babe,
Stifling with rudest grasp all natural good.

Ah! to the stranger-soul, when first it peeps
From its new tenement, and looks abroad
For happiness and sympathy, how stern
And desolate a tract is this wide world!
How wither'd all the buds of natural good!
No shade, no shelter from the sweeping storms
Of pitiless power! On its wretched frame,
Poison'd, perchance, by the disease and woe
Heap'd on the wretched parent whence it sprung
By morals, law, and custom, the pure winds
Of heaven, that renovate the insect tribes,
May breathe not. The untainting light of day
May visit not its longings. It is bound
Ere it has life: yea, all the chains are forged
Long ere its being: all liberty and love
And peace is torn from its defencelessness;
Cursed from its birth, even from its cradle doom'd
To abjectness and bondage!

Throughout this varied and eternal world
Soul is the only element, the block
That for uncounted ages has remain'd.
The moveless pillar of a mountain's weight
Is active, living spirit. Every grain
Is sentient both in unity and part,
And the minutest atom comprehends
A world of loves and hatreds; these beget
Evil and good: hence truth and falsehood spring;
Hence will and thought and action, all the germs
Of pain or pleasure, sympathy or hate,
That variegate the eternal universe.
Soul is not more polluted than the beams
Of heaven's pure orb, ere round their rapid lines
The taint of earth-born atmospheres arise.

Man is of soul and body, form'd for deeds
Of high resolve, on fancy's boldest wing
To soar unwearied, fearlessly to turn
The keenest pangs to peacefulness, and taste
The joys which mingled sense and spirit yield.
Or he is form'd for abjectness and woe,
To grovel on the dunghill of his fears,
To shrink at every sound, to quench the flame
Of natural love in sensualism, to know
That hour as blest when on his worthless days
The frozen hand of death shall set its seal,
Yet fear the cure, though hating the disease.
The one is man that shall hereafter be;
The other, man as vice has made him now.

War is the statesman's game, the priest's delight,
The lawyer's jest, the hired assassin's trade,
And, to those royal murderers, whose mean thrones
Are bought by crimes of treachery and gore,
The bread they eat, the staff on which they lean.
Guards, garb'd in blood-red livery, surround
Their palaces, participate the crimes
That force defends, and from a nation's rage
Secures the crown, which all the curses reach
That famine, frenzy, woe and penury breathe.
These are the hired bravoes who defend
The tyrant's throne (3)—the bullies of his fear:
These are the sinks and channels of worst vice,
The refuse of society, the dregs
Of all that is most vile: their cold hearts blend
Deceit with sternness, ignorance with pride,
All that is mean and villanous, with rage
Which hopelessness of good, and self-contempt,
Alone might kindle; they are deck'd in wealth,
Honour and power, then are sent abroad
To do their work. The pestilence that stalks
In gloomy triumph through some eastern land
Is less destroying. They cajole with gold,
And promises of fame, the thoughtless youth
Already crush'd with servitude: he knows
His wretchedness too late, and cherishes
Repentance for his ruin, when his doom
Is seal'd in gold and blood!
Those too the tyrant serve, who, skill'd to snare
The feet of justice in the toils of law,
Stand, ready to oppress the weaker still;
And, right or wrong, will vindicate for gold,
Sneering at public virtue, which beneath
Their pitiless tread lies torn and trampled, where
Honour sits smiling at the sale of truth.

Then grave and hoary-headed hypocrites,
Without a hope, a passion, or a love,
Who, through a life of luxury and lies,
Have crept by flattery to the seats of power,
Support the system whence their honours flow—
They have three words:—well tyrants know their use,
Well pay them for the loan, with usury
Torn from a bleeding world!—God, Hell, and Heaven.
A vengeful, pitiless, and almighty fiend,
Whose mercy is a nick-name for the rage
Of tameless tigers hungering for blood.
Hell, a red gulf of everlasting fire,
Where poisonous and undying worms prolong
Eternal misery to those hapless slaves
Whose life has been a penance for its crimes.
And Heaven, a meed for those who dare belie
Their human nature, quake, believe, and cringe
Before the mockeries of earthly power.

These tools the tyrant tempers to his work,
Wields in his wrath, and as he wills destroys,
Omnipotent in wickedness: the while
Youth springs, age moulders, manhood tamely does
His bidding, bribed by short-lived joys to lend
Force to the weakness of his trembling arm.

They rise, they fall; one generation comes
Yielding its harvest to destruction's scythe.
It fades, another blossoms: yet behold!
Red glows the tyrant's stamp-mark on its bloom,
Withering and cankering deep its passive prime.
He has invented lying words and modes,
Empty and vain as his own coreless heart;
Evasive meanings, nothings of much sound,
To lure the heedless victim to the toils
Spread round the valley of its paradise.

Look to thyself, priest, conqueror, or prince!
Whether thy trade is falsehood, and thy lusts
Deep wallow in the earnings of the poor,
With whom thy master was:—or thou delight'st
In numbering o'er the myriads of thy slain,
All misery weighing nothing in the scale
Against thy short-lived fame: or thou dost load
With cowardice and crime the groaning land,
A pomp-fed king. Look to thy wretched self!
Aye, art thou not the veriest slave that e'er
Crawl'd on the loathing earth? Are not thy days
Days of unsatisfying listlessness?
Dost thou not cry, ere night's long rack is o'er,
When will the morning come? Is not thy youth
A vain and feverish dream of sensualism?
Thy manhood blighted with unripe disease?
Are not thy views of unregretted death
Drear, comfortless, and horrible? Thy mind,
Is it not morbid as thy nerveless frame,
Incapable of judgment, hope, or love?
And dost thou wish the errors to survive
That bar thee from all sympathies of good,
After the miserable interest
Thou hold'st in their protraction? When the grave
Has swallow'd up thy memory and thyself,
Dost thou desire the bane that poisons earth
To twine its roots around thy coffin'd clay,
Spring from thy bones, and blossom on thy tomb,
That of its fruit thy babes may eat and die?

V.

Thus do the generations of the earth
Go to the grave, and issue from the womb, (4)
Surviving still the imperishable change
That renovates the world; even as the leaves
Which the keen frost-wind of the waning year
Has scatter'd on the forest soil, (5) and heap'd
For many seasons there, though long they choke,
Loading with loathsome rottenness the land,
All germs of promise. Yet when the tall trees
From which they fell, shorn of their lovely shapes,
Lie level with the earth to moulder there,
They fertilize the land they long deform'd,
Till from the breathing lawn a forest springs
Of youth, integrity, and loveliness,
Like that which gave it life, to spring and die.
Thus suicidal selfishness, that blights
The fairest feelings of the opening heart,
Is destined to decay, whilst from the soil
Shall spring all virtue, all delight, all love,
And judgment cease to wage unnatural war
With passion's unsubduable array.

Twin-sister of religion, selfishness!
Rival in crime and falsehood, aping all
The wanton horrors of her bloody play;
Yet frozen, unimpassion'd, spiritless,
Shunning the light, and owning not its name:
Compell'd, by its deformity, to screen
With flimsy veil of justice and of right,
Its unattractive lineaments, that scare
All, save the brood of ignorance: at once
The cause and the effect of tyranny;
Unblushing, harden'd, sensual, and vile;
Dead to all love but of its abjectness,
With heart impassive by more noble powers
Than unshared pleasure, sordid gain, or fame;
Despising its own miserable being,
Which still it longs, yet fears to disenthrall.

Hence commerce springs, the venal interchange
Of all that human art or nature yield;
Which wealth should purchase not, but want demand,
And natural kindness hasten to supply
From the full fountain of its boundless love,
For ever stifled, drain'd, and tainted now.
Commerce! beneath whose poison-breathing shade
No solitary virtue dares to spring,
But poverty and wealth with equal hand
Scatter their withering curses, and unfold
The doors of premature and violent death,
To pining famine and full-fed disease,
To all that shares the lot of human life,
Which poison'd body and soul, scarce drags the chain,
That lengthens as it goes and clanks behind.

Commerce has set the mark of selfishness,
The signet of its all-enslaving power,
Upon a shining ore, and call'd it gold:
Before whose image bow the vulgar great,
The vainly rich, the miserable proud,
The mob of peasants, nobles, priests, and kings, (6)
And with blind feelings reverence the power
That grinds them to the dust of misery.
But in the temple of their hireling hearts
Gold is a living god, and rules in scorn
All earthly things but virtue.

Since tyrants, by the sale of human life,
Heap luxuries to their sensualism, and fame
To their wide-wasting and insatiate pride,
Success has sanction'd to a credulous world
The ruin, the disgrace, the woe of war.
His hosts of blind and unresisting dupes
The despot numbers; from his cabinet
These puppets of his schemes he moves at will,
Even as the slaves by force or famine driven,
Beneath a vulgar master, to perform
A task of cold and brutal drudgery;—
Harden'd to hope, insensible to fear,
Scarce living pulleys of a dead machine,
Mere wheels of work and articles of trade,
That grace the proud and noisy pomp of wealth!

The harmony and happiness of man
Yields to the wealth of nations; that which lifts
His nature to the heaven of its pride,
Is barter'd for the poison of his soul;
The weight that drags to earth his towering hopes,
Blighting all prospect but of selfish gain,
Withering all passion but of slavish fear,
Extinguishing all free and generous love
Of enterprise and daring, even the pulse
That fancy kindles in the beating heart
To mingle with sensation, it destroys,—
Leaves nothing but the sordid lust of self,
The groveling hope of interest and gold,
Unqualified, unmingled, unredeem'd
Even by hypocrisy.

And statesmen boast
Of wealth! (7) The wordy eloquence that lives
After the ruin of their hearts, can gild
The bitter poison of a nation's woe,
Can turn the worship of the servile mob
To their corrupt and glaring idol fame,
From virtue, trampled by its iron tread,
Although its dazzling pedestal be raised
Amid the horrors of a limb-strewn field,
With desolated dwellings smoking round.
The man of ease, who, by his warm fire-side,
To deeds of charitable intercourse
And bare fulfilment of the common laws
Of decency and prejudice, confines
The struggling nature of his human heart,
Is duped by their cold sophistry; he sheds
A passing tear perchance upon the wreck
Of earthly peace, when near his dwelling's door
The frightful waves are driven,—when his son
Is murder'd by the tyrant, or religion
Drives his wife raving mad. (8) But the poor man,
Whose life is misery, and fear, and care;
Whom the morn wakens but to fruitless toil;
Who ever hears his famish'd offspring's scream,
Whom their pale mother's uncomplaining gaze
For ever meets, and the proud rich man's eye
Flashing command, and the heart-breaking scene
Of thousands like himself;—he little heeds
The rhetoric of tyranny; his hate
Is quenchless as his wrongs; he laughs to scorn
The vain and bitter mockery of words,

Feeling the horror of the tyrant's deeds,
And unrestrain'd but by the arm of power,
That knows and dreads his enmity.

The iron rod of penury still compels
Her wretched slave to bow the knee to wealth,
And poison, with unprofitable toil,
A life too void of solace to confirm
The very chains that bind him to his doom.
Nature, impartial in munificence,
Has gifted man with all-subduing will:
Matter, with all its transitory shapes,
Lies subjected and plastic at his feet,
That, weak from bondage, tremble as they tread.
How many a rustic Milton has past by,
Stifling the speechless longings of his heart,
In unremitting drudgery and care!
How many a vulgar Cato has compell'd
His energies, no longer tameless then,
To mould a pin, or fabricate a nail!
How many a Newton, to whose passive ken
Those mighty spheres that gem infinity
Were only specks of tinsel, fix'd in heaven
To light the midnights of his native town!

Yet every heart contains perfection's germ:
The wisest of the sages of the earth,
That ever from the stores of reason drew
Science and truth, and virtue's dreadless tone,
Were but a weak and inexperienced boy,
Proud, sensual, unimpassion'd, unimbued
With pure desire and universal love,
Compared to that high being, of cloudless brain,
Untainted passion, elevated will,
Which death (who even would linger long in awe
Within his noble presence, and beneath
His changeless eyebeam), might alone subdue.
Him, every slave now dragging through the filth
Of some corrupted city his sad life,
Pining with famine, swoln with luxury,
Blunting the keenness of his spiritual sense
With narrow schemings and unworthy cares,
Or madly rushing through all violent crime,
To move the deep stagnation of his soul,—
Might imitate and equal.

But mean lust
Has bound its chains so tight around the earth,
That all within it but the virtuous man
Is venal: gold or fame will surely reach
The price prefix'd by selfishness, to all
But him of resolute and unchanging will;
Whom, nor the plaudits of a servile crowd,
Nor the vile joys of tainting luxury,
Can bribe to yield his elevated soul
To tyranny or falsehood, though they wield
With blood-red hand the sceptre of the world.

All things are sold: the very light of heaven
Is venal; earth's unsparing gifts of love,
The smallest and most despicable things
That lurk in the abysses of the deep,
All objects of our life, even life itself,
And the poor pittance which the laws allow
Of liberty, the fellowship of man,
Those duties which his heart of human love
Should urge him to perform instinctively,
Are bought and sold as in a public mart
Of undisguising selfishness, that sets
On each its price, the stamp-mark of her reign.
Even love is sold; (9) the solace of all woe
Is turn'd to deadliest agony, old age
Shivers in selfish beauty's loathing arms,
And youth's corrupted impulses prepare
A life of horror from the blighting bane
Of commerce; whilst the pestilence that springs
From unenjoying sensualism, has fill'd
All human life with hydra-headed woes.

Falsehood demands but gold to pay the pangs
Of outraged conscience; for the slavish priest
Sets no great value on his hireling faith:
A little passing pomp, some servile souls,
Whom cowardice itself mite safely chain,
Or the spare mite of avarice could bribe
To deck the triumph of their languid zeal,
Can make him minister to tyranny.
More daring crime requires a loftier meed:
Without a shudder, the slave-soldier lends
His arm to murderous deeds, and steels his heart,
When the dread eloquence of dying men,
Low mingling on the lonely field of fame,
Assails that nature, whose applause he sells
For the gross blessings of a patriot mob,
For the vile gratitude of heartless kings,
And for a cold world's good word,—viler still!

There is a nobler glory, which survives
Until our being fades, and, solacing
All human care, accompanies its change;
Deserts not virtue in the dungeon's gloom,
And, in the precincts of the palace, guides
Its footsteps through that labyrinth of crime;
Imbues his lineaments with dauntlessness,
Even when, from power's avenging hand, he takes
Its sweetest, last and noblest title—death;
—The consciousness of good, which neither gold,
Nor sordid fame, nor hope of heavenly bliss,
Can purchase; but a life of resolute good,
Unalterable will, quenchless desire
Of universal happiness, the heart
That beats with it in unison, the brain,
Whose ever wakeful wisdom toils to change
Reason's rich stores for its eternal weal.

This commerce of sincerest virtue needs
No meditative signs of selfishness,
No jealous intercourse of wretched gain,
No balancings of prudence, cold and long;
In just and equal measure all is weigh'd,
One scale contains the sum of human weal,
And one, the good man's heart.

How vainly seek
The selfish for that happiness denied
To aught but virtue! Blind and harden'd they,
Who hope for peace amid the storms of care,
Who covet power they know not how to use,
And sigh for pleasure they refuse to give,—
Madly they frustrate still their own designs;
And, where they hope that quiet to enjoy
Which virtue pictures, bitterness of soul,

Pining regrets, and vain repentances,
Disease, disgust, and lassitude, pervade
Their valueless and miserable lives.

But hoary-headed selfishness has felt
Its death-blow, and is tottering to the grave:
A brighter morn awaits the human day,
When every transfer of earth's natural gifts
Shall be a commerce of good words and works;
When poverty and wealth, the thirst of fame,
The fear of infamy, disease and woe,
War with its million horrors, and fierce hell
Shall live but in the memory of time,
Who, like a penitent libertine, shall start,
Look back, and shudder at his younger years.

VI.

All touch, all eye, all ear,
The Spirit felt the Fairy's burning speech.
O'er the thin texture of its frame,
The varying periods painted changing glows,
As on a summer even,
When soul-enfolding music floats around,
The stainless mirror of the lake
Re-images the eastern gloom,
Mingling convulsively its purple hues
With sunset's burnish'd gold.

Then thus the Spirit spoke:
It is a wild and miserable world!
Thorny, and full of care,
Which every fiend can make his prey at will.
O Fairy! in the lapse of years,
Is there no hope in store?
Will yon vast suns roll on
Interminably, still illuming
The night of so many wretched souls,
And see no hope for them?
Will not the universal Spirit e'er
Revivify this wither'd limb of Heaven?

The Fairy calmly smiled
In comfort, and a kindling gleam of hope
Suffused the Spirit's lineaments.
Oh! rest thee tranquil; chase those fearful doubts,
Which ne'er could rack an everlasting soul,
That sees the chains which bind it to its doom.
Yes! crime and misery are in yonder earth,
Falsehood, mistake, and lust;
But the eternal world
Contains at once the evil and the cure.
Some eminent in virtue shall start up,
Even in perversest time:
The truths of their pure lips, that never die,
Shall bind the scorpion falsehood with a wreath
Of ever-living flame,
Until the monster sting itself to death.

How sweet a scene will earth become!
Of purest spirits, a pure dwelling-place,
Symphonious with the planetary spheres;
When man, with changeless nature coalescing,
Will undertake regeneration's work,
When its ungenial poles no longer point
To the red and baleful sun
That faintly twinkles there. (10)

Spirit! on yonder earth,
Falsehood now triumphs; deadly power
Has fix'd its seal upon the lip of truth!
Madness and misery are there!
The happiest is most wretched! Yet confide,
Until pure health-drops, from the cup of joy,
Fall like a dew of balm upon the world.
Now, to the scene I show, in silence turn,
And read the blood-stain'd charter of all woe,
Which nature soon, with recreating hand,
Will blot in mercy from the book of earth.
How bold the flight of passion's wandering wing,
How swift the step of reason's firmer tread,
How calm and sweet the victories of life,
How terrorless the triumph of the grave!
How powerless were the mightiest monarch's arm,
Vain his loud threat, and impotent his frown!
How ludicrous the priest's dogmatic roar!
The weight of his exterminating curse
How light! and his affected charity,
To suit the pressure of the changing times,
What palpable deceit!—but for thy aid,
Religion! but for thee, prolific fiend,
Who peoplest earth with demons, hell with men,
And heaven with slaves!

Thou taintest all thou lookest upon!—the stars,
Which on thy cradle beam'd so brightly sweet,
Were gods to the distemper'd playfulness
Of thy untutor'd infancy: the trees,
The grass, the clouds, the mountains, and the sea,
All living things that walk, swim, creep, or fly,
Were gods: the sun had homage, and the moon
Her worshipper. Then thou becamest, a boy,
More daring in thy frenzies: every shape,
Monstrous or vast, or beautifully wild,
Which, from sensation's relics, fancy culls;
The spirits of the air, the shuddering ghost,
The genii of the elements, the powers
That give a shape to nature's varied works,
Had life and place in the corrupt belief
Of thy blind heart: yet still thy youthful hands
Were pure of human blood. Then manhood gave
Its strength and ardour to thy frenzied brain;
Thine eager gaze scann'd the stupendous scene,
Whose wonders mock'd the knowledge of thy pride:
Their everlasting and unchanging laws
Reproach'd thine ignorance. Awhile thou stoodst
Baffled and gloomy; then thou didst sum up
The elements of all that thou didst know;
The changing seasons, winter's leafless reign,
The budding of the heaven-breathing trees,
The eternal orbs that beautify the night,
The sun-rise, and the setting of the moon,
Earthquakes and wars, and poisons and disease,
And all their causes, to an abstract point,
Converging, thou didst bend, and call'd it God!
The self-sufficing, the omnipotent,
The merciful, and the avenging God!
Who, prototype of human misrule, sits
High in heaven's realm, upon a golden throne,
Even like an earthly king; and whose dread work,
Hell, gapes for ever for the unhappy slaves
Of fate, whom he created in his sport,
To triumph in their torments when they fell!
Earth heard the name; earth trembled, as the smoke

Of his revenge ascended up to heaven,
Blotting the constellations; and the cries
Of millions, butcher'd in sweet confidence
And unsuspecting peace, even when the bonds
Of safety were confirm'd by wordy oaths
Sworn in his dreadful name, rung through the land;
Whilst innocent babes writhed on thy stubborn spear,
And thou didst laugh to hear the mother's shriek
Of maniac gladness, as the sacred steel
Felt cold in her torn entrails!

Religion! thou wert then in manhood's prime:
But age crept on: one God would not suffice
For senile puerility; thou framedst
A tale to suit thy dotage, and to glut
Thy misery-thirsting soul, that the mad fiend
Thy wickedness had pictured, might afford
A plea for sating the unnatural thirst
For murder, rapine, violence, and crime,
That still consumed thy being, even when
Thou heardst the step of fate;—that flames might light
Thy funeral scene, and the shrill horrent shrieks
Of parents dying on the pile that burn'd
To light their children to thy paths, the roar
Of the encircling flames, the exulting cries
Of thine apostles, loud commingling there,
Might sate thine hungry ear
Even on the bed of death!

But now contempt is mocking thy grey hairs;
Thou art descending to the darksome grave,
Unhonour'd and unpitied, but by those
Whose pride is passing by like thine, and sheds,
Like thine, a glare that fades before the sun
Of truth, and shines but in the dreadful night
That long has lower'd above the ruin'd world.

Throughout these infinite orbs of mingling light,
Of which yon earth is one, is wide diffused
A spirit of activity and life,
That knows no term, cessation, or decay;
That fades not when the lamp of earthly life,
Extinguish'd in the dampness of the grave,
Awhile there slumbers, more than when the babe
In the dim newness of its being feels
The impulses of sublunary things,
And all is wonder to unpractised sense:
But, active, stedfast, and eternal, still,
Guides the fierce whirlwind, in the tempest roars,
Cheers in the day, breathes in the balmy groves,
Strengthens in health, and poisons in disease;
And in the storm of change, that ceaselessly
Rolls round th' eternal universe, and shakes
Its undecaying battlement, presides,
Apportioning with irresistible law
The place each spring of its machine shall fill;
So that, when waves on waves tumultuous heap
Confusion to the clouds, and fiercely driven
Heaven's lightnings scorch th' uprooted ocean-fords,
Whilst, to the eye of shipwreck'd mariner,
Lone sitting on the bare and shuddering rock,
All seems unlink'd contingency and chance:
No atom of this turbulence fulfils
A vague and unnecessitated task,
Or acts but as it must and ought to act. (11)
Even the minutest molecule of light,
That in an April sunbeam's fleeting glow
Fulfils its destined, though invisible work,
The universal Spirit guides; nor less
When merciless ambition, or mad zeal,
Has led two hosts of dupes to battle-field,
That, blind, they there may dig each other's graves,
And call the sad work glory, does it rule
All passions: not a thought, a will, an act,
No working of the tyrant's moody mind,
Nor one misgiving of the slaves who boast
Their servitude, to hide the shame they feel,
Nor the events enchaining every will,
That from the depths of unrecorded time
Have drawn all-influencing virtue, pass
Unrecognised, or unforeseen by thee,
Soul of the Universe! eternal spring
Of life and death, of happiness and woe,
Of all that chequers the phantasmal scene
That floats before our eyes in wavering light,
Which gleams but on the darkness of our prison,
Whose chains and massy walls
We feel, but cannot see.

Spirit of Nature! all-sufficing Power,
Necessity! thou mother of the world! (12)
Unlike the God of human error, thou
Requirest no prayers or praises; the caprice
Of man's weak will belongs no more to thee
Than do the changeful passions of his breast
To thy unvarying harmony: the slave,
Whose horrible lusts spread misery o'er the world,
And the good man, who lifts, with virtuous pride,
His being, in the sight of happiness,
That springs from his own works; the poison-tree,
Beneath whose shade all life is wither'd up,
And the fair oak, whose leafy dome affords
A temple where the vows of happy love
Are register'd, are equal in thy sight:
No love, no hate thou cherishest; revenge
And favoritism, and worst desire of fame,
Thou knowest not: all that the wide world contains
Are but thy passive instruments, and thou
Regard'st them all with an impartial eye,
Whose joy or pain thy nature cannot feel,
Because thou hast not human sense,
Because thou art not human mind.

Yes! when the sweeping storm of time
Has sung its death-dirge o'er the ruin'd fanes
And broken altars of th' almighty fiend,
Whose name usurps thy honours, and the blood
Through centuries clotted there, has floated down
The tainted flood of ages, shalt thou live
Unchangeable! A shrine is raised to thee,
Which, nor the tempest breath of time,
Nor the interminable flood,
Over earth's slight pageant rolling,
Availeth to destroy,—
The sensitive extension of the world.
That wonderous and eternal fane,
Where pain and pleasure, good and evil join,
To do the will of strong necessity,
And life, in multitudinous shapes,
Still pressing forward where no term can be,
Like hungry and unresting flame
Curls round the eternal columns of its strength.

VII.

SPIRIT.

I was an infant when my mother went
To see an atheist burn'd. She took me there:
The dark-robed priests were met around the pile;
The multitude was gazing silently;
And as the culprit pass'd with dauntless mien,
Temper'd disdain in his unaltering eye,
Mix'd with a quiet smile, shone calmly forth:
The thirsty fire crept round his manly limbs;
His resolute eyes were scorch'd to blindness soon;
His death-pang rent my heart! the insensate mob
Utter'd a cry of triumph, and I wept.
Weep not, child! cried my mother, for that man
Has said, There is no God. (13)

FAIRY.

There is no God!
Nature confirms the faith his death-groan seal'd:
Let heaven and earth, let man's revolving race,
His ceaseless generations tell their tale;
Let every part depending on the chain
That links it to the whole, point to the hand
That grasps its term! let every seed that falls
In silent eloquence unfold its store
Of argument: infinity within,
Infinity without, belie creation;
The exterminable spirit it contains
Is nature's only God; but human pride
Is skilful to invent most serious names
To hide its ignorance.

The name of God
Has fenced about all crime with holiness,
Himself the creature of his worshippers,
Whose names and attributes and passions change,
Seeva, Buddh, Foh, Jehovah, God, or Lord,
Even with the human dupes who build his shrines,
Still serving o'er the war-polluted world
For desolation's watch-word; whether hosts
Stain his death-blushing chariot wheels, as on
Triumphantly they roll, whilst Brahmins raise
A sacred hymn to mingle with the groans;
Or countless partners of his power divide
His tyranny to weakness; or the smoke
Of burning towns, the cries of female helplessness,
Unarm'd old age, and youth, and infancy,
Horribly massacred, ascend to heaven
In honour of his name; or, last and worst,
Earth groans beneath religion's iron age,
And priests dare babble of a God of peace,
Even whilst their hands are red with guiltless blood,
Murdering the while, uprooting every germ
Of truth, exterminating, spoiling all,
Making the earth a slaughter-house!

O Spirit! through the sense
By which thy inner nature was apprised
Of outward shows, vague dreams have roll'd,
And varied reminiscences have waked
Tablets that never fade;
All things have been imprinted there,
The stars, the sea, the earth, the sky,
Even the unshapeliest lineaments
Of wild and fleeting visions
Have left a record there
To testify of earth.

These are my empire, for to me is given
The wonders of the human world to keep,
And fancy's thin creations to endow
With manner, being, and reality;
Therefore a wondrous phantom, from the dreams
Of human error's dense and purblind faith,
I will evoke, to meet thy questioning.
Ahasuerus, rise! (14)

A strange and woe-worn wight
Arose beside the battlement,
And stood unmoving there.
His inessential figure cast no shade
Upon the golden floor;
His port and mien bore mark of many years,
And chronicles of untold ancientness
Were legible within his beamless eye:
Yet his cheek bore the mark of youth;
Freshness and vigor knit his manly frame;
The wisdom of old age was mingled there
With youth's primæval dauntlessness;
And inexpressible woe,
Chasten'd by fearless resignation, gave
An awful grace to his all-speaking brow.

SPIRIT.

Is there a God?

AHASUERUS.

Is there a God!—aye, an almighty God,
And vengeful as almighty! Once his voice
Was heard on earth: earth shudder'd at the sound;
The fiery-visaged firmament express'd
Abhorrence, and the grave of nature yawn'd
To swallow all the dauntless and the good
That dared to hurl defiance at his throne,
Girt as it was with power. None but slaves
Survived,—cold-blooded slaves, who did the work
Of tyrannous omnipotence; whose souls
No honest indignation ever urged
To elevated daring, to one deed
Which gross and sensual self did not pollute.
These slaves built temples for the omnipotent fiend,
Gorgeous and vast: the costly altars smoked
With human blood, and hideous pæans rung
Through all the long-drawn aisles. A murderer heard
His voice in Egypt, one whose gifts and arts
Had raised him to his eminence in power,
Accomplice of omnipotence in crime,
And confidant of the all-knowing one.
These were Jehovah's words.

From an eternity of idleness
I, God, awoke; in seven days' toil made earth
From nothing; rested, and created man:
I placed him in a paradise, and there
Planted the tree of evil, so that he
Might eat and perish, and my soul procure
Wherewith to sate its malice, and to turn,
Even like a heartless conqueror of the earth,
All misery to my fame. The race of men
Chosen to my honour, with impunity
May sate the lusts I planted in their heart.

Here I command thee hence to lead them on,
Until, with harden'd feet, their conquering troops
Wade on the promised soil through woman's blood,
And make my name be dreaded through the land.
Yet ever burning flame and ceaseless woe
Shall be the doom of their eternal souls,
With every soul on this ungrateful earth,
Virtuous or vicious, weak or strong,—even all
Shall perish, to fulfil the blind revenge
(Which you, to men, call justice) of their God.

The murderer's brow
Quiver'd with horror.

God omnipotent,
Is there no mercy? must our punishment
Be endless? will long ages roll away,
And see no term? Oh! wherefore hast thou made
In mockery and wrath this evil earth?
Mercy becomes the powerful—be but just:
O God! repent and save.

One way remains:
I will beget a son, and he shall bear
The sins of all the world; (15) he shall arise
In an unnoticed corner of the earth,
And there shall die upon a cross, and purge
The universal crime; so that the few
On whom my grace descends, those who are mark'd
As vessels to the honour of their God,
May credit this strange sacrifice, and save
Their souls alive: millions shall live and die,
Who ne'er shall call upon their Saviour's name,
But, unredeem'd, go to the gaping grave.
Thousands shall deem it an old woman's tale,
Such as the nurses frighten babes withal:
These in a gulf of anguish and of flame
Shall curse their reprobation endlessly,
Yet tenfold pangs shall force them to avow,
Even on their beds of torment, where they howl,
My honour, and the justice of their doom.
What then avail their virtuous deeds, their thoughts
Of purity, with radiant genius bright,
Or lit with human reason's earthly ray?
Many are call'd, but few will I elect.
Do thou my bidding, Moses!

Even the murderer's cheek
Was blanch'd with horror, and his quivering lips
Scarce faintly utter'd—O almighty one,
I tremble and obey!

O Spirit! centuries have set their seal
On this heart of many wounds, and loaded brain,
Since the Incarnate came: humbly he came,
Veiling his horrible Godhead in the shape
Of man, scorn'd by the world, his name unheard,
Save by the rabble of his native town,
Even as a parish demagogue. He led
The crowd; he taught them justice, truth, and peace,
In semblance; but he lit within their souls
The quenchless flames of zeal, and blest the sword
He brought on earth to satiate with the blood
Of truth and freedom his malignant soul.
At length his mortal frame was led to death.
I stood beside him: on the torturing cross
No pain assail'd his unterrestrial sense;
And yet he groan'd. Indignantly I summ'd
The massacres and miseries which his name
Had sanction'd in my country, and I cried,
Go! go! in mockery.
A smile of godlike malice reillumined
His fading lineaments.—I go, he cried,
But thou shalt wander o'er the unquiet earth
Eternally.———The dampness of the grave
Bathed my imperishable front. I fell,
And long lay tranced upon the charmed soil.
When I awoke hell burn'd within my brain,
Which stagger'd on its seat; for all around
The mouldering relics of my kindred lay,
Even as the Almighty's ire arrested them,
And in their various attitudes of death
My murder'd children's mute and eyeless sculls
Glared ghastily upon me.

But my soul,
From sight and sense of the polluting woe
Of tyranny, had long learn'd to prefer
Hell's freedom to the servitude of heaven.
Therefore I rose, and dauntlessly began
My lonely and unending pilgrimage,
Resolved to wage unwearіable war
With my almighty tyrant, and to hurl
Defiance at his impotence to harm
Beyond the curse I bore. The very hand
That barr'd my passage to the peaceful grave
Has crush'd the earth to misery, and given
Its empire to the chosen of his slaves.
These have I seen, even from the earliest dawn
Of weak, unstable and precarious power;
Then preaching peace, as now they practise war,
So, when they turn'd but from the massacre
Of unoffending infidels, to quench
Their thirst for ruin in the very blood
That flow'd in their own veins, and pitiless zeal
Froze every human feeling, as the wife
Sheathed in her husband's heart the sacred steel,
Even whilst its hopes were dreaming of her love;
And friends to friends, brothers to brothers stood
Opposed in bloodiest battle-field, and war,
Scarce satiable by fate's last death-draught waged,
Drunk from the wine-press of the Almighty's wrath;
Whilst the red cross, in mockery of peace,
Pointed to victory! When the fray was done,
No remnant of the exterminated faith
Survived to tell its ruin, but the flesh,
With putrid smoke poisoning the atmosphere,
That rotted on the half-extinguish'd pile.

Yes! I have seen God's worshippers unsheathe
The sword of his revenge, when grace descended,
Confirming all unnatural impulses,
To sanctify their desolating deeds;
And frantic priests waved the ill-omened cross
O'er the unhappy earth: then shone the sun
On showers of gore from the upflashing steel
Of safe assassination, and all crime
Made stingless by the spirits of the Lord.
And blood-red rainbows canopied the land.
Spirit! no year of my eventful being
Has pass'd unstain'd by crime and misery,
Which flows from God's own faith. I've marked his slaves,
With tongues whose lies are venomous, beguile
The insensate mob, and, whilst one hand was red

With murder, feign to stretch the other out
For brotherhood and peace; and that they now
Babble of love and mercy, whilst their deeds
Are mark'd with all the narrowness and crime
That freedom's young arm dare not yet chastise,
Reason may claim our gratitude, who now
Establishing the imperishable throne
Of truth, and stubborn virtue, maketh vain
The unprevailing malice of my foe,
Whose bootless rage heaps torments for the brave,
Adds impotent eternities to pain,
Whilst keenest disappointment racks his breast
To see the smiles of peace around them play,
To frustrate or to sanctify their doom.

Thus have I stood,—through a wild waste of years
Struggling with whirlwinds of mad agony,
Yet peaceful, and serene, and self-enshrined,
Mocking my powerless tyrant's horrible curse
With stubborn and unalterable will,
Even as a giant oak, which heaven's fierce flame
Had scathed in the wilderness, to stand
A monument of fadeless ruin there;
Yet peacefully and movelessly it braves
The midnight conflict of the wintry storm,
As in the sun-light's calm it spreads
Its worn and wither'd arms on high
To meet the quiet of a summer's noon.

The Fairy waved her wand:
Ahasuerus fled
Fast as the shapes of mingled shade and mist,
That lurk in the glens of a twilight grove,
Flee from the morning beam:
The matter of which dreams are made
Not more endow'd with actual life
Than this phantasmal portraiture
Of wandering human thought.

VIII.

The present and the past thou hast beheld:
It was a desolate sight. Now, Spirit, learn
The secrets of the future.—Time!
Unfold the brooding pinion of thy gloom,
Render thou up thy half-devoured babes,
And from the cradles of eternity,
Where millions lie lull'd to their portion'd sleep
By the deep murmuring stream of passing things,
Tear thou that gloomy shroud.—Spirit, behold
Thy glorious destiny!

Joy to the Spirit came.
Through the wide rent in Time's eternal veil,
Hope was seen beaming through the mists of fear:
Earth was no longer hell;
Love, freedom, health, had given
Their ripeness to the manhood of its prime,
And all its pulses beat
Symphonious to the planetary spheres:
Then dulcet music swell'd
Concordant with the life-strings of the soul;
It throbb'd in sweet and languid beatings there,
Catching new life from transitory death,—
Like the vague sighings of a wind at even,
That wakes the wavelets of the slumbering sea
And dies on the creation of its breath,
And sinks and rises, fails and swells by fits:
Was the pure stream of feeling
That sprung from these sweet notes,
And o'er the Spirit's human sympathies
With mild and gentle motion calmly flow'd.

Joy to the Spirit came,—
Such joy as when a lover sees
The chosen of his soul in happiness,
And witnesses her peace
Whose woe to him were bitterer than death,
Sees her unfaded cheek
Glow mantling in first luxury of health,
Thrills with her lovely eyes,
Which like two stars amid the heaving main
Sparkle through liquid bliss.

Then in her triumph spoke the Fairy Queen:
I will not call the ghost of ages gone
To unfold the frightful secrets of its lore;
The present now is past,
And those events that desolate the earth
Have faded from the memory of Time,
Who dares not give reality to that
Whose being I annul. To me is given
The wonders of the human world to keep,
Space, matter, time, and mind. Futurity
Exposes now its treasure; let the sight
Renew and strengthen all thy failing hope.
O human Spirit! spur thee to the goal
Where virtue fixes universal peace,
And, midst the ebb and flow of human things,
Show somewhat stable, somewhat certain still,
A light-house o'er the wild of dreary waves.
The habitable earth is full of bliss;
Those wastes of frozen billows that were hurl'd
By everlasting snow-storms round the poles,
Where matter dared not vegetate or live,
But ceaseless frost round the vast solitude
Bound its broad zone of stillness, are unloosed;
And fragrant zephyrs there from spicy isles
Ruffle the placid ocean-deep, that rolls
Its broad, bright surges to the sloping sand,
Whose roar is waken'd into echoings sweet
To murmur through the heaven-breathing groves,
And melodize with man's blest nature there.

Those deserts of immeasurable sand,
Whose age-collected fervors scarce allow'd
A bird to live, a blade of grass to spring,
Where the shrill chirp of the green lizard's love
Broke on the sultry silentness alone,
Now teem with countless rills and shady woods,
Corn-fields and pastures and white cottages;
And where the startled wilderness beheld
A savage conqueror stain'd in kindred blood,
A tigress sating with the flesh of lambs
The unnatural famine of her toothless cubs,
Whilst shouts and howlings through the desert rang,
Sloping and smooth the daisy-spangled lawn,
Offering sweet incense to the sun-rise, smiles
To see a babe before his mother's door,
Sharing his morning's meal
With the green and golden basilisk
That comes to lick his feet.

Those trackless deeps, where many a weary sail
Has seen above the illimitable plain,
Morning on night, and night on morning rise,
Whilst still no land to greet the wanderer spread
Its shadowy mountains on the sun-bright sea,
Where the loud roarings of the tempest-waves
So long have mingled with the gusty wind
In melancholy loneliness, and swept
The desert of those ocean solitudes,
But vocal to the sea-bird's harrowing shriek,
The bellowing monster, and the rushing storm,
Now to the sweet and many mingling sounds
Of kindliest human impulses respond.
Those lonely realms bright garden-isles begem,
With lightsome clouds and shining seas between,
And fertile valleys, resonant with bliss,
Whilst green woods overcanopy the wave,
Which like a toil-worn labourer leaps to shore,
To meet the kisses of the flowrets there.

All things are recreated, and the flame
Of consentaneous love inspires all life:
The fertile bosom of the earth gives suck
To myriads, who still grow beneath her care,
Rewarding her with their pure perfectness:
The balmy breathings of the wind inhale
Her virtues, and diffuse them all abroad:
Health floats amid the gentle atmosphere,
Glows in the fruits, and mantles on the stream:
No storms deform the beaming brow of heaven,
Nor scatter in the freshness of its pride
The foliage of the ever-verdant trees;
But fruits are ever ripe, flowers ever fair,
And autumn proudly bears her matron grace,
Kindling a flush on the fair cheek of spring,
Whose virgin bloom beneath the ruddy fruit
Reflects its tint and blushes into love.

The lion now forgets to thirst for blood:
There might you see him sporting in the sun
Beside the dreadless kid; his claws are sheathed,
His teeth are harmless, custom's force has made
His nature as the nature of a lamb.
Like passion's fruit, the nightshade's tempting bane
Poisons no more the pleasure it bestows:
All bitterness is past; the cup of joy
Unmingled mantles to the goblet's brim,
And courts the thirsty lips it fled before.

But chief, ambiguous man, he that can know
More misery, and dream more joy than all;
Whose keen sensations thrill within his breast
To mingle with a loftier instinct there,
Lending their power to pleasure and to pain,
Yet raising, sharpening, and refining each;
Who stands amid the ever-varying world,
The burthen or the glory of the earth;
He chief perceives the change, his being notes
The gradual renovation, and defines
Each movement of its progress on his mind.

Man, where the gloom of the long polar night
Lowers o'er the snow-clad rocks and frozen soil,
Where scarce the hardiest herb that braves the frost
Basks in the moonlight's ineffectual glow,
Shrank with the plants, and darken'd with the night;
His chill'd and narrow energies, his heart,
Insensible to courage, truth, or love,
His stunted stature and imbecile frame,
Mark'd him for some abortion of the earth,
Fit compeer of the bears that roam'd around,
Whose habits and enjoyments were his own:
His life a feverish dream of stagnant woe,
Whose meagre wants, but scantily fulfill'd,
Apprised him ever of the joyless length
Which his short being's wretchedness had reach'd;
His death a pang which famine, cold and toil,
Long on the mind, whilst yet the vital spark
Clung to the body stubbornly, had brought:
All was inflicted here that earth's revenge
Could wreak on the infringers of her law;
One curse alone was spared—the name of God.

Nor where the tropics bound the realms of day
With a broad belt of mingling cloud and flame,
Where blue mists through the unmoving atmosphere
Scatter'd the seeds of pestilence, and fed
Unnatural vegetation, where the land
Teem'd with all earthquake, tempest and disease,
Was man a nobler being; slavery
Had crush'd him to his country's blood-stain'd dust;
Or he was barter'd for the fame of power,
Which, all internal impulses destroying,
Makes human will an article of trade;
Or he was changed with Christians for their gold,
And dragg'd to distant isles, where to the sound
Of the flesh-mangling scourge, he does the work
Of all-polluting luxury and wealth,
Which doubly visits on the tyrants' heads
The long-protracted fulness of their woe;
Or he was led to legal butchery,
To turn to worms beneath that burning sun,
Where kings first leagued against the rights of men,
And priests first traded with the name of God.

Even where the milder zone afforded man
A seeming shelter, yet contagion there,
Blighting his being with unnumber'd ills,
Spread like a quenchless fire; nor truth till late
Avail'd to arrest its progress, or create
That peace which first in bloodless victory waved
Her snowy standard o'er this favour'd clime:
There man was long the train-bearer of slaves,
The mimic of surrounding misery,
The jackal of ambition's lion-rage,
The bloodhound of religion's hungry zeal.

Here now the human being stands adorning
This loveliest earth with taintless body and mind;
Blest from his birth with all bland impulses,
Which gently in his noble bosom wake
All kindly passions and all pure desires.
Him, still from hope to hope the bliss pursuing,
Which from the exhaustless lore of human weal
Draws on the virtuous mind, the thoughts that rise
In time-destroying infiniteness, gift
With self-enshrined eternity, (16) that mocks
The unprevailing hoariness of age,
And man, once fleeting o'er the transient scene
Swift as an unremember'd vision, stands
Immortal upon earth: no longer now
He slays the lamb that looks him in the face, (17)

And horribly devours his mangled flesh,
Which, still avenging nature's broken law,
Kindled all putrid humours in his frame,
All evil passions, and all vain belief,
Hatred, despair, and loathing in his mind,
The germs of misery, death, disease, and crime.
No longer now the winged habitants,
That in the woods their sweet lives sing away,
Flee from the form of man; but gather round,
And prune their sunny feathers on the hands
Which little children stretch in friendly sport
Towards these dreadless partners of their play.
All things are void of terror: man has lost
His terrible prerogative, and stands
An equal amidst equals: happiness
And science dawn, though late, upon the earth;
Peace cheers the mind, health renovates the frame;
Disease and pleasure cease to mingle here,
Reason and passion cease to combat there;
Whilst each unfetter'd o'er the earth extend
Their all-subduing energies, and wield
The sceptre of a vast dominion there;
Whilst every shape and mode of matter lends
Its force to the omnipotence of mind,
Which from its dark mine drags the gem of truth
To decorate its paradise of peace.

IX.

O happy Earth! reality of Heaven!
To which those restless souls that ceaselessly
Throng through the human universe, aspire;
Thou consummation of all mortal hope!
Thou glorious prize of blindly-working will!
Whose rays, diffused throughout all space and time,
Verge to one point and blend for ever there:
Of purest spirits thou pure dwelling-place!
Where care and sorrow, impotence and crime,
Languor, disease, and ignorance dare not come:
O happy Earth, reality of Heaven!

Genius has seen thee in her passionate dreams,
And dim forebodings of thy loveliness
Haunting the human heart, have there entwined
Those rooted hopes of some sweet place of bliss,
Where friends and lovers meet to part no more.
Thou art the end of all desire and will,
The product of all action; and the souls
That by the paths of an aspiring change
Have reach'd thy haven of perpetual peace,
There rest from the eternity of toil
That framed the fabric of thy perfectness.

Even Time, the conqueror, fled thee in his fear;
That hoary giant, who, in lonely pride,
So long had ruled the world, that nations fell
Beneath his silent footstep. Pyramids,
That for milleniums had withstood the tide
Of human things, his storm-breath drove in sand
Across that desert where their stones survived
The name of him whose pride had heap'd them there.
Yon monarch, in his solitary pomp,
Was but the mushroom of a summer day,
That his light-wing'd footstep press'd to dust:
Time was the king of earth: all things gave way
Before him, but the fix'd and virtuous will,
The sacred sympathies of soul and sense,
That mock'd his fury and prepared his fall.

Yet slow and gradual dawn'd the morn of love;
Long lay the clouds and darkness o'er the scene,
Till from its native heaven they roll'd away:
First, crime triumphant o'er all hope career'd
Unblushing, undisguising, bold and strong;
Whilst falsehood, trick'd in virtue's attributes,
Long sanctified all deeds of vice and woe,
Till done by her own venomous sting to death,
She left the moral world without a law,
No longer fettering passion's fearless wing,
Nor searing reason with the brand of God.
Then steadily the happy ferment work'd;
Reason was free; and wild though passion went
Through tangled glens and wood-embosom'd meads,
Gathering a garland of the strangest flowers,
Yet like the bee returning to her queen,
She bound the sweetest on her sister's brow,
Who meek and sober kiss'd the sportive child,
No longer trembling at the broken rod.

Mild was the slow necessity of death:
The tranquil Spirit fail'd beneath its grasp,
Without a groan, almost without a fear,
Calm as a voyager to some distant land,
And full of wonder, full of hope as he.
The deadly germs of languor and disease
Died in the human frame, and purity
Blest with all gifts her earthly worshippers.
How vigorous then the athletic form of age!
How clear its open and unwrinkled brow!
Where neither avarice, cunning, pride, or care,
Had stamp'd the seal of grey deformity
On all the mingling lineaments of time.
How lovely the intrepid front of youth!
Which meek-eyed courage deck'd with freshest grace;
Courage of soul, that dreaded not a name,
And elevated will, that journey'd on
Through life's phantasmal scene in fearlessness,
With virtue, love, and pleasure, hand in hand.

Then, that sweet bondage which is freedom's self,
And rivets with sensation's softest tie
The kindred sympathies of human souls,
Needed no fetters of tyrannic law:
Those delicate and timid impulses
In nature's primal modesty arose,
And with undoubting confidence disclosed
The growing longings of its dawning love,
Uncheck'd by dull and selfish chastity,
That virtue of the cheaply virtuous,
Who pride themselves in senselessness and frost.
No longer prostitution's venom'd banc
Poison'd the springs of happiness and life;
Woman and man, in confidence and love,
Equal and free and pure, together trod
The mountain-paths of virtue, which no more
Were stain'd with blood from many a pilgrim's feet.

Then, where, through distant ages, long in pride
The palace of the monarch-slave had mock'd
Famine's faint groan, and penury's silent tear,
A heap of crumbling ruins stood, and threw
Year after year their stones upon the field,

Wakening a lonely echo; and the leaves
Of the old thorn, that on the topmost tower
Usurp'd the royal ensign's grandeur, shook
In the stern storm that sway'd the topmost tower,
And whisper'd strange tales in the whirlwind's ear.

Low through the lone cathedral's roofless aisles
The melancholy winds a death-dirge sung:
It were a sight of awfulness to see
The works of faith and slavery, so vast,
So sumptuous, yet so perishing withal!
Even as the corpse that rests beneath its wall.
A thousand mourners deck the pomp of death
To-day, the breathing marble glows above
To decorate its memory, and tongues
Are busy of its life: to-morrow, worms
In silence and in darkness seize their prey.

Within the massy prison's mouldering courts,
Fearless and free the ruddy children play'd,
Weaving gay chaplets for their innocent brows
With the green ivy and the red wall-flower,
That mock the dungeon's unavailing gloom;
The ponderous chains, and gratings of strong iron,
There rusted amid heaps of broken stone,
That mingled slowly with their native earth:
There the broad beam of day, which feebly once
Lighted the cheek of lean captivity
With a pale and sickly glare, then freely shone
On the pure smiles of infant playfulness:
No more the shuddering voice of hoarse despair
Peal'd through the echoing vaults, but soothing notes
Of ivy-finger'd winds and gladsome birds
And merriment were resonant around.

These ruins soon left not a wreck behind:
Their elements, wide scatter'd o'er the globe,
To happier shapes were moulded, and became
Ministrant to all blissful impulses:
Thus human things were perfected, and earth,
Even as a child beneath its mother's love,
Was strengthen'd in all excellence, and grew
Fairer and nobler with each passing year.

Now Time his dusky pennons o'er the scene
Closes in stedfast darkness, and the past
Fades from our charmed sight. My task is done:
Thy lore is learned. Earth's wonders are thine own,
With all the fear and all the hope they bring.
My spells are past: the present now recurs.
Ah me! a pathless wilderness remains
Yet unsubdued by man's reclaiming hand.

Yet, human Spirit! bravely hold thy course,
Let virtue teach thee firmly to pursue
The gradual paths of an aspiring change:
For birth and life and death, and that strange state
Before the naked soul has found its home,
All tend to perfect happiness, and urge
The restless wheels of being on their way,
Whose flashing spokes, instinct with infinite life,
Bicker and burn to gain their destined goal:
For birth but wakes the spirit to the sense
Of outward shows, whose unexperienced shape
New modes of passion to its frame may lend;
Life is its state of action, and the store
Of all events is aggregated there
That variegate the eternal universe;
Death is a gate of dreariness and gloom,
That leads to azure isles and beaming skies,
And happy regions of eternal hope.
Therefore, O Spirit! fearlessly bear on:
Though storms may break the primrose on its stalk,
Though frosts may blight the freshness of its bloom,
Yet spring's awakening breath will woo the earth,
To feed with kindliest dews its favourite flower,
That blooms in mossy banks and darksome glens,
Lighting the greenwood with its sunny smile.

Fear not then, Spirit! death's disrobing hand,
So welcome when the tyrant is awake,
So welcome when the bigot's hell-torch burns;
'T is but the voyage of a darksome hour,
The transient gulf-dream of a startling sleep.
Death is no foe to virtue: earth has seen
Love's brightest roses on the scaffold bloom,
Mingling with freedom's fadeless laurels there,
And presaging the truth of vision'd bliss.
Are there not hopes within thee, which this scene
Of link'd and gradual being has confirm'd?
Whose stingings bade thy heart look further still,
When to the moonlight walk, by Henry led,
Sweetly and sadly thou didst talk of death?
And wilt thou rudely tear them from thy breast,
Listening supinely to a bigot's creed,
Or tamely crouching to the tyrant's rod,
Whose iron thongs are red with human gore?
Never: but bravely bearing on, thy will
Is destined an eternal war to wage
With tyranny and falsehood, and uproot
The germs of misery from the human heart.
Thine is the hand whose piety would soothe
The thorny pillow of unhappy crime,
Whose impotence an easy pardon gains,
Watching its wanderings as a friend's disease:
Thine is the brow whose mildness would defy
Its fiercest rage, and brave its sternest will,
When fenced by power and master of the world.
Thou art sincere and good; of resolute mind,
Free from heart-withering custom's cold control,
Of passion lofty, pure and unsubdued.
Earth's pride and meanness could not vanquish thee,
And therefore art thou worthy of the boon
Which thou hast now received: virtue shall keep
Thy footsteps in the path that thou hast trod,
And many days of beaming hope shall bless
Thy spotless life of sweet and sacred love.
Go, happy one! and give that bosom joy
  Whose sleepless spirit waits to catch
  Light, life and rapture from thy smile.

  The fairy waves her wand of charm.
Speechless with bliss the Spirit mounts the car,
  That roll'd beside the battlement,
Bending her beamy eyes in thankfulness.
  Again the enchanted steeds were yoked,
  Again the burning wheels inflame
The steep descent of heaven's untrodden way.
  Fast and far the chariot flew:
  The vast and fiery globes that roll'd
  Around the Fairy's palace-gate
Lessen'd by slow degrees, and soon appear'd

Such tiny twinklers as the planet orbs
That there attendant on the solar power
With borrow'd light pursued their narrower way.

Earth floated then below:
The chariot paused a moment there;
The Spirit then descended:
The restless coursers paw'd the ungenial soil,
Snuff'd the gross air, and then, their errand done,
Unfurl'd their pinions to the winds of heaven.

The Body and the Soul united then.
A gentle start convulsed Ianthe's frame:
Her veiny eyelids quietly unclosed;
Moveless awhile the dark blue orbs remain'd:
She look'd around in wonder, and beheld
Henry, who kneel'd in silence by her couch,
Watching her sleep with looks of speechless love,
And the bright beaming stars
That through the casement shone.

NOTES.

Note 1, page 106, col. 1.

The sun's unclouded orb
Roll'd through the black concave.

Beyond our atmosphere the sun would appear a rayless orb of fire in the midst of a black concave. The equal diffusion of its light on earth is owing to the refraction of the rays by the atmosphere, and their reflection from other bodies. Light consists either of vibrations propagated through a subtle medium, or of numerous minute particles repelled in all directions from the luminous body. Its velocity greatly exceeds that of any substance with which we are acquainted: observations on the eclipses of Jupiter's satellites have demonstrated that light takes up no more than 8′ 7″ in passing from the sun to the earth, a distance of 95,000,000 miles.—Some idea may be gained of the immense distance of the fixed stars, when it is computed that many years would elapse before light could reach this earth from the nearest of them; yet in one year light travels 5,422,400,000,000 miles, which is a distance 5,707,600 times greater than that of the sun from the earth.

Note 2, page 106, col. 2.

Whilst round the chariot's way
Innumerable systems roll'd.

The plurality of worlds,—the indefinite immensity of the universe, is a most awful subject of contemplation. He who rightly feels its mystery and grandeur, is in no danger of seduction from the falsehoods of religious systems, or of deifying the principle of the universe. It is impossible to believe that the Spirit that pervades this infinite machine, begat a son upon the body of a Jewish woman; or is angered at the consequences of that necessity, which is a synonyme of itself. All that miserable tale of the Devil, and Eve, and an Intercessor, with the childish mummeries of the God of the Jews, is irreconcileable with the knowledge of the stars. The works of his fingers have borne witness against him.

The nearest of the fixed stars is inconceivably distant from the earth, and they are probably proportionably distant from each other. By a calculation of the velocity of light, Sirius is supposed to be at least 54,224,000,000,000 miles from the earth.[1] That which appears only like a thin and silvery cloud streaking the heaven, is in effect composed of innumerable clusters of suns, each shining with its own light, and illuminating numbers of planets that revolve around them. Millions and millions of suns are ranged around us, all attended by innumerable worlds, yet calm, regular, and harmonious, all keeping the paths of immutable necessity.

Note 3, page 112, col. 1.

These are the hired bravoes who defend
The tyrant's throne.

To employ murder as a means of justice, is an idea which a man of an enlightened mind will not dwell upon with pleasure. To march forth in rank and file, and all the pomp of streamers and trumpets, for the purpose of shooting at our fellow-men as a mark; to inflict upon them all the variety of wound and anguish; to leave them weltering in their blood; to wander over the field of desolation, and count the number of the dying and the dead,—are employments which in thesis we may maintain to be necessary, but which no good man will contemplate with gratulation and delight. A battle, we suppose, is won:—thus truth is established, thus the cause of justice is confirmed! It surely requires no common sagacity to discern the connection between this immense heap of calamities and the assertion of truth or the maintenance of justice.

Kings, and ministers of state, the real authors of the calamity, sit unmolested in their cabinet, while those against whom the fury of the storm is directed are, for the most part, persons who have been trepanned into the service, or who are dragged unwillingly from their peaceful homes into the field of battle. A soldier is a man whose business it is to kill those who never offended him, and who are the innocent martyrs of other men's iniquities. Whatever may become of the abstract question of the justifiableness of war, it seems impossible that the soldier should not be a depraved and unnatural being.

To these more serious and momentous considerations it may be proper to add, a recollection of the ridiculousness of the military character. Its first constituent is obedience: a soldier is, of all descriptions of men, the most completely a machine; yet his profession inevitably teaches him something of dogmatism, swaggering, and self-consequence: he is like the puppet of a showman, who, at the very time he is made to strut and swell and display the most farcical airs, we perfectly know cannot assume the most insignificant gesture, advance either to the right or the left, but as he is moved by his exhibitor.—Godwin's *Enquirer, Essay* v.

I will here subjoin a little poem, so strongly expressive of my abhorrence of despotism and falsehood, that I fear lest it never again may be depictured so vividly. This opportunity is perhaps the only one that ever will occur of rescuing it from oblivion.

FALSEHOOD AND VICE;

A DIALOGUE.

Whilst monarchs laugh'd upon their thrones
To hear a famish'd nation's groans,
And hugg'd the wealth wrung from the woe
That makes its eyes and veins o'erflow,—

[1] See Nicholson's Encyclopedia, art. Light.

Those thrones, high built upon the heaps
Of bones where frenzied Famine sleeps,
Where Slavery wields her scourge of iron
Red with mankind's unheeded gore,
And War's mad fiends the scene environ,
Mingling with shrieks a drunken roar,
There Vice and Falsehood took their stand,
High raised above the unhappy land.

FALSEHOOD.

Brother! arise from the dainty fare
Which thousands have toil'd and bled to bestow,
A finer feast for thy hungry ear
Is the news that I bring of human woe.

VICE.

And, secret one! what hast thou done,
To compare, in thy turnid pride, with me?
I, whose career, through the blasted year,
Has been track'd by despair and agony.

FALSEHOOD.

What have I done!——I have torn the robe
From baby truth's unshelter'd form,
And round the desolated globe
Borne safely the bewildering charm:
My tyrant-slaves to a dungeon-floor
Have bound the fearless innocent,
And streams of fertilizing gore
Flow from her bosom's hideous rent,
Which this unfailing dagger gave....
I dread that blood!—no more—this day
Is ours, though her eternal ray
Must shine upon our grave.
Yet know, proud Vice, had I not given
To thee the robe I stole from heaven,
Thy shape of ugliness and fear
Had never gain'd admission here.

VICE.

And know, that had I disdain'd to toil,
But sate in my loathsome cave the while,
And ne'er to these hateful sons of heaven,
GOLD, MONARCHY, and MURDER, given;
Hadst thou with all thine art essay'd
One of thy games then to have play'd,
With all thine overweening boast,
Falsehood! I tell thee thou hadst lost!—
Yet wherefore this dispute?—we tend,
Fraternal, to one common end;
In this cold grave beneath my feet,
Will our hopes, our fears, and our labours, meet.

FALSEHOOD.

I brought my daughter, RELIGION, on earth:
She smother'd Reason's babes in their birth;
But dreaded their mother's eye severe,—
So the crocodile sluuk off slily in fear,
And loosed her bloodhounds from the den....
They started from dreams of slaughter'd men,
And, by the light of her poison eye,
Did her work o'er the wide earth frightfully:
The dreadful stench of her torches' flare,
Fed with human fat, polluted the air:
The curses, the shrieks, the ceaseless cries
Of the many-mingling miseries,
As on she trod, ascended high
And trumpeted my victory!—
Brother, tell what thou hast done.

VICE.

I have extinguish'd the noon-day sun,
In the carnage smoke of battles won:
Famine, Murder, Hell, and Power
Were glutted in that glorious hour
Which searchless Fate had stamp'd for me
With the seal of her security....
For the bloated wretch on yonder throne
Commanded the bloody fray to rise.
Like me he joy'd at the stifled moan
Wrung from a nation's miseries;
While the snakes, whose slime even him *defiled*,
In ecstasies of malice smiled:
They thought 't was theirs,—but mine the deed!
Theirs is the toil, but mine the meed—
Ten thousand victims madly bleed.
They dream that tyrants goad them there
With poisonous war to taint the air:
These tyrants, on their beds of thorn,
Swell with the thoughts of murderous fame,
And with their gains, to lift my name.
Restless they plan from night to morn:
I—I do all; without my aid
Thy daughter, that relentless maid,
Could ne'er o'er a death-bed urge
The fury of her venom'd scourge.

FALSEHOOD.

Brother, well:—the world is ours;
And whether thou or I have won,
The pestilence expectant lowers
On all beneath you blasted sun.
Our joys, our toils, our honours, meet
In the milk-white and wormy winding-sheet:
A short-lived hope, unceasing care,
Some heartless scraps of godly prayer,
A moody curse, and a frenzied sleep
Ere gapes the grave's unclosing deep,
A tyrant's dream, a coward's start,
The ice that clings to a priestly heart,
A judge's frown, a courtier's smile,
Make the great whole for which we toil;
And, brother, whether thou or I
Have done the work of misery,
It little boots: thy toil and pain,
Without my aid, were more than vain;
And but for thee I ne'er had sate
The guardian of heaven's palace gate.

Note 4, page 113, col. 1.

Thus do the generations of the earth
Go to the grave, and issue from the womb.

One generation passeth away and another generation cometh, but the earth abideth for ever. The sun also ariseth and the sun goeth down, and hasteth to his place where he arose. The wind goeth toward the south and turneth about unto the north, it whirleth about continually, and the wind returneth again according to his circuits. All the rivers run into the sea, yet the sea is not full; unto the place whence the rivers come, thither shall they return again.—*Ecclesiastes*, chap. i.

Note 5, page 113, col. 1.

Even as the leaves
Which the keen frost-wind of the waning year
Has scatter'd on the forest soil.

Οἵη περ φύλλων γενεὴ, τοίηδε καὶ ἀνδρῶν.
Φύλλα τὰ μέν τ' ἄνεμος χαμάδὶς χέει, ἄλλα δέ θ' ὕλη
Τηλεθόωσα φύει, ἔαρος δ' ἐπιγίγνεται ὥρη·
Ὡς ἀνδρῶν γενεὴ, ἡ μὲν φύει, ἡδ' ἀπολήγει.

ΙΛΙΑΔ. Ζ, l. 146.

Note 6, page 113, col. 1.

The mob of peasants, nobles, priests, and kings.

Suave mari magno turbantibus æquora ventis
E terrâ magnam alterius spectare laborem;
Non quia vexari quemquam 'st jucunda voluptas,
Sed quibus ipse malis careas quia cernere suave 'st.
Suave etiam belli certamina magna tueri,
Per campos instructa, tua sine parte pericli;
Sed nil dulcius est bene quam munita tenere
Edita doctrina sapientum templa serena;
Despicere unde queas alios, passimque videre
Errare atque viam palantes quærere vitæ;
Certare ingenio; contendere nobilitate;
Nocteis atque dies niti præstante labore
Ad summas emergere opes, rerumque potiri.
O miseras hominum menteis! O pectora cæca!

Luc. lib. ii.

Note 7, page 113, col. 2.

And statesmen boast
Of wealth!

There is no real wealth but the labour of man. Were the mountains of gold and the vallies of silver, the world would not be one grain of corn the richer; no one comfort would be added to the human race. In consequence of our consideration for the precious metals, one man is enabled to heap to himself luxuries at the expence of the necessaries of his neighbour; a system admirably fitted to produce all the varieties of disease and crime, which never fail to characterise the two extremes of opulence and penury. A speculator takes pride to himself as the promoter of his country's prosperity, who employs a number of hands in the manufacture of articles avowedly destitute of use, or subservient only to the unhallowed cravings of luxury and ostentation. The nobleman, who employs the peasants of his neighbourhood in building his palaces, until «*jam pauca aratro jugera regiæ moles relinquunt,*» flatters himself that he has gained the title of a patriot by yielding to the impulses of vanity. The show and pomp of courts adduces the same apology for its continuance; and many a fête has been given, many a woman has eclipsed her beauty by her dress, to benefit the labouring poor and to encourage trade. Who does not see that this is a remedy which aggravates, whilst it palliates the countless diseases of society? The poor are set to labour,—for what? Not the food for which they famish: not the blankets for want of which their babes are frozen by the cold of their miserable hovels: not those comforts of civilization without which civilized man is far more miserable than the meanest savage; oppressed as he is by all its insidious evils, within the daily and taunting prospect of its innumerable benefits assiduously exhibited before him:—no; for the pride of power, for the miserable isolation of pride, for the false pleasures of the hundredth part of society. No greater evidence is afforded of the wide extended and radical mistakes of civilized man than this fact: those arts which are essential to his very being are held in the greatest contempt; employments are lucrative in an inverse ratio to their usefulness: [1] the jeweller, the toyman, the actor gains fame and wealth by the exercise of his useless and ridiculous art; whilst the cultivator of the earth, he without whom society must cease to subsist, struggles through contempt and penury, and perishes by that famine which, but for his unceasing exertions, would annihilate the rest of mankind.

I will not insult common sense by insisting on the doctrine of the natural equality of man. The question is not concerning its desirableness, but its practicability: so far as it is practicable, it is desirable. That state of human society which approaches nearer to an equal partition of its benefits and evils should, *cæteris paribus*, be preferred: but so long as we conceive that a wanton expenditure of human labour, not for the necessities, not even for the luxuries of the mass of society, but for the egotism and ostentation of a few of its members, is defensible on the ground of public justice, so long we neglect to approximate to the redemption of the human race.

Labour is required for physical, and leisure for moral improvement: from the former of these advantages the rich, and from the latter the poor, by the inevitable conditions of their respective situations, are precluded. A state which should combine the advantages of both, would be subjected to the evils of neither. He that is deficient in firm health, or vigorous intellect, is but half a man: hence it follows, that, to subject the labouring classes to unnecessary labour, is wantonly depriving them of any opportunities of intellectual improvement; and that the rich are heaping up for their own mischief the disease, lassitude and ennui by which their existence is rendered an intolerable burthen.

English reformers exclaim against sinecures,—but the true pension-list is the rent-roll of the landed proprietors: wealth is a power usurped by the few, to compel the many to labour for their benefit. The laws which support this system derive their force from the ignorance and credulity of its victims: they are the result of a conspiracy of the few against the many, who are themselves obliged to purchase this pre-eminence by the loss of all real comfort.

The commodities that substantially contribute to the subsistence of the human species form a very short catalogue: they demand from us but a slender portion of industry. If these only were produced, and sufficiently produced, the species of man would be continued. If the labour necessarily required to produce them were equitably divided among the poor, and, still more, if it were equitably divided among all, each man's share of labour would be light, and his portion of leisure would be ample. There was a time when this leisure would have been of small comparative value: it is to be hoped that the time will come, when it will be applied to the most important purposes. Those hours which are not required for the production of the necessaries of life, may be devoted to the cultivation of the understanding, the enlarging our stock of knowledge, the refining our taste, and thus opening to us new and more exquisite sources of enjoyment.

* * * * * *

It was perhaps necessary that a period of monopoly and oppression should subsist, before a period of cultivated equality could subsist. Savages perhaps would never have been excited to the discovery of truth and the invention of art, but by the narrow motives which such a period affords. But surely, after the savage state has ceased, and men have set out in the glorious career of discovery and invention, monopoly and oppression cannot be necessary to prevent them from returning to a state of barbarism.—Godwin's *Enquirer, Essay II. See also* Pol. Jus., *book VIII. chap.* 11.

It is a calculation of this admirable author, that all the conveniences of civilized life might be produced, if society would divide the labour equally among its members, by each individual being employed in labour two hours during the day.

Note 8, page 113, col. 2.

Or religion
Drives his wife raving mad.

I am acquainted with a lady of considerable accomplishments, and the mother of a numerous family, whom the Christian religion has goaded to incurable insanity. A parallel case is, I believe, within the experience of every physician.

Nam jam sæpe homines patriam, carosque parentes
Prodiderunt, vitare Acherusia templa petentes.
Lucretius.

[1] See Rousseau, « De l'Inégalité parmi les Hommes,» note 7.

Note 9, page 114, col. 2.
Even love is sold.

Not even the intercourse of the sexes is exempt from the despotism of positive institution. Law pretends even to govern the indisciplinable wanderings of passion, to put fetters on the clearest deductions of reason, and, by appeals to the will, to subdue the involuntary affections of our nature. Love is inevitably consequent upon the perception of loveliness. Love withers under constraint: its very essence is liberty: it is compatible neither with obedience, jealousy, nor fear: it is there most pure, perfect, and unlimited, where its votaries live in confidence, equality, and unreserve.

How long then ought the sexual connection to last? what law ought to specify the extent of the grievances which should limit its duration? A husband and wife ought to continue so long united as they love each other: any law which should bind them to cohabitation for one moment after the decay of their affection, would be a most intolerable tyranny, and the most unworthy of toleration. How odious a usurpation of the right of private judgment should that law be considered, which should make the ties of friendship indissoluble, in spite of the caprices, the inconstancy, the fallibility, and capacity for improvement of the human mind. And by so much would the fetters of love be heavier and more unendurable than those of friendship, as love is more vehement and capricious, more dependent on those delicate peculiarities of imagination, and less capable of reduction to the ostensible merits of the object.

The state of society in which we exist is a mixture of feudal savageness and imperfect civilization. The narrow and unenlightened morality of the Christian religion is an aggravation of these evils. It is not even until lately that mankind have admitted that happiness is the sole end of the science of ethics, as of all other sciences; and that the fanatical idea of mortifying the flesh for the love of God has been discarded. I have heard, indeed, an ignorant collegian adduce, in favour of Christianity, its hostility to every worldly feeling![1]

But if happiness be the object of morality, of all human unions and disunions; if the worthiness of every action is to be estimated by the quantity of pleasurable sensation it is calculated to produce, then the connection of the sexes is so long sacred as it contributes to the comfort of the parties, and is naturally dissolved when its evils are greater than its benefits. There is nothing immoral in this separation. Constancy has nothing virtuous in itself, independently of the pleasure it confers, and partakes of the temporising spirit of vice in proportion as it endures tamely moral defects of magnitude in the object of its indiscreet choice. Love is free: to promise for ever to love the same woman, is not less absurd than to promise to believe the same creed: such a vow, in both cases, excludes us from all inquiry. The language of the votarist is this: The woman I now love may be infinitely inferior to many others; the creed I now profess may be a mass of errors and absurdities; but I exclude myself from all future information as to the amiability of the one and the truth of the other, resolving blindly, and in spite of conviction, to adhere to them. Is this the language of delicacy and reason? Is the love of such a frigid heart of more worth than its belief?

The present system of constraint does no more, in the majority of instances, than make hypocrites or open enemies. Persons of delicacy and virtue, unhappily united to one whom they find it impossible to love, spend the loveliest season of their life in unproductive efforts to appear otherwise than they are, for the sake of the feelings of their partner, or the welfare of their mutual offspring: those of less generosity and refinement openly avow their disappointment, and linger out the remnant of that union, which only death can dissolve, in a state of incurable bickering and hostility. The early education of their children takes its colour from the squabbles of the parents; they are nursed in a systematic school of ill humour, violence, and falsehood. Had they been suffered to part at the moment when indifference rendered their union irksome, they would have been spared many years of misery; they would have connected themselves more suitably, and would have found that happiness in the society of more congenial partners which is for ever denied them by the despotism of marriage. They would have been separately useful and happy members of society, who, whilst united, were miserable, and rendered misanthropical by misery. The conviction that wedlock is indissoluble holds out the strongest of all temptations to the perverse: they indulge without restraint in acrimony, and all the little tyrannies of domestic life, when they know that their victim is without appeal. If this connection were put on a rational basis, each would be assured that habitual ill temper would terminate in separation, and would check this vicious and dangerous propensity.

Prostitution is the legitimate offspring of marriage and its accompanying errors. Women, for no other crime than having followed the dictates of a natural appetite, are driven with fury from the comforts and sympathies of society. It is less venial than murder: and the punishment which is inflicted on her who destroys her child to escape reproach, is lighter than the life of agony and disease to which the prostitute is irrecoverably doomed. Has a woman obeyed the impulse of unerring nature;—society declares war against her, pitiless and eternal war: she must be the tame slave, she must make no reprisals; theirs is the right of persecution, hers the duty of endurance. She lives a life of infamy: the loud and bitter laugh of scorn scares her from all return. She dies of long and lingering disease; yet *she* is in fault, *she* is the criminal, *she* the froward and untameable child,—and society, forsooth, the pure and virtuous matron, who casts her as an abortion from her undefiled bosom! Society avenges herself on the criminals of her own creation; she is employed in anathematizing the vice to-day, which yesterday she was the most zealous to teach. Thus is formed one tenth of the population of London: meanwhile the evil is twofold. Young men, excluded by the fanatical idea of chastity from the society of modest and accomplished women, associate with these vicious and miserable beings, destroying thereby all those ex-

[1] The first Christian emperor made a law by which seduction was punished with death: if the female pleaded her own consent, she also was punished with death; if the parents endeavoured to screen the criminals, they were banished and their estates were confiscated; the slaves who might be accessary were burned alive, or forced to swallow melted lead. The very offspring of an illegal love were involved in the consequences of the sentence.—Gibbon's *Decline and Fall, etc.* vol. ii, page 210. See also, for the hatred of the primitive Christians to love, and even marriage, page 269.

quisite and delicate sensibilities whose existence cold-hearted worldlings have denied; annihilating all genuine passion, and debasing that to a selfish feeling which is the excess of generosity and devotedness. Their body and mind alike crumble into a hideous wreck of humanity; idiotcy and disease become perpetuated in their miserable offspring, and distant generations suffer for the bigoted morality of their forefathers. Chastity is a monkish and evangelical superstition, a greater foe to natural temperance even than unintellectual sensuality; it strikes at the root of all domestic happiness, and consigns more than half of the human race to misery, that some few may monopolize according to law. A system could not well have been devised more studiously hostile to human happiness than marriage.

I conceive that, from the abolition of marriage, the fit and natural arrangement of sexual connection would result. I by no means assert that the intercourse would be promiscuous: on the contrary; it appears, from the relation of parent to child, that this union is generally of long duration, and marked above all others with generosity and self-devotion. But this is a subject which it is perhaps premature to discuss. That which will result from the abolition of marriage, will be natural and right, because choice and change will be exempted from restraint.

In fact, religion and morality, as they now stand, compose a practical code of misery and servitude: the genius of human happiness must tear every leaf from the accursed book of God, ere man can read the inscription on his heart. How would morality, dressed up in stiff stays and finery, start from her own disgusting image, should she look in the mirror of nature!

Note 10, page 115, col. 1.

To the red and baleful sun
That faintly twinkles there.

The north polar star, to which the axis of the earth, in its present state of obliquity, points. It is exceedingly probable, from many considerations, that this obliquity will gradually diminish, until the equator coincides with the ecliptic: the nights and days will then become equal on the earth throughout the year, and probably the seasons also. There is no great extravagance in presuming that the progress of the perpendicularity of the poles may be as rapid as the progress of intellect; or that there should be a perfect identity between the moral and physical improvement of the human species. It is certain that wisdom is not compatible with disease, and that, in the present state of the climates of the earth, health, in the true and comprehensive sense of the word, is out of the reach of civilized man. Astronomy teaches us that the earth is now in its progress, and that the poles are every year becoming more and more perpendicular to the ecliptic. The strong evidence afforded by the history of mythology, and geological researches, that some event of this nature has taken place already, affords a strong presumption, that this progress is not merely an oscillation, as has been surmised by some late astronomers. [1] Bones of animals peculiar to the torrid zone have been found in the north of Siberia, and on the banks of the river Ohio. Plants have been found in the fossil state in the interior of Germany, which demand the present climate of Hindostan for their production. [1] The researches of M. Bailly [2] establish the existence of a people who inhabited a tract in Tartary 49° north latitude, of greater antiquity than either the Indians, the Chinese, or the Chaldeans, from whom these nations derived their sciences and theology. We find, from the testimony of ancient writers, that Britain, Germany and France were much colder than at present, and that their great rivers were annually frozen over. Astronomy teaches us also, that since this period the obliquity of the earth's position has been considerably diminished.

[1] Laplace, Système du Monde.

Note 11, page 116, col. 1.

No atom of this turbulence fulfils
A vague and unnecessitated task,
Or acts but as it must and ought to act.

Deux exemples serviront à nous rendre plus sensible le principe qui vient d'être posé; nous emprunterons l'un du physique et l'autre du moral. Dans un tourbillon de poussière qu'élève un vent impétueux, quelque confus qu'il paroisse à nos yeux; dans la plus affreuse tempête excitée par des vents opposés qui soulèvent les flots, il n'y a pas une seule molécule de poussière ou d'eau qui soit placée au *hasard*, qui n'ait sa cause suffisante pour occuper le lieu où elle se trouve, et qui n'agisse rigoureusement de la manière dont elle doit agir. Un géomètre qui connaîtroit exactement les différentes forces qui agissent dans ces deux cas, et les propriétés des molécules qui sont mues, démontreroit que d'après des causes données, chaque molécule agit précisément comme elle doit agir, et ne peut agir autrement qu'elle ne fait.

Dans les convulsions terribles qui agitent quelquefois les sociétés politiques, et qui produisent souvent le renversement d'un empire, il n'y a pas une seule action, une seule parole, une seule pensée, une seule volonté, une seule passion dans les agens qui concourent à la révolution comme destructeurs ou comme victimes, qui ne soit nécessaire, qui n'agisse comme elle doit agir, qui n'opère infailliblement les effets qu'elle doit opérer suivant la place qu'occupent ces agens dans ce tourbillon moral. Cela paroîtroit évident pour une intelligence qui sera en état de saisir et d'apprécier toutes les actions et réactions des esprits et des corps de ceux qui contribuent à cette révolution.—*Système de la Nature*, vol. 1. page 44.

Note 12, page 116, col. 2.

Necessity, thou mother of the world!

He who asserts the doctrine of Necessity, means that, contemplating the events which compose the moral and material universe, he beholds only an immense and uninterrupted chain of causes and effects, no one of which could occupy any other place than it does occupy, or acts in any other place than it does act. The idea of necessity is obtained by our experience of the connection between objects, the uniformity of the operations of nature, the constant conjunction of similar events, and the consequent inference of one from the other. Mankind are therefore agreed in the admission of necessity, if they admit that these two circumstances take place in voluntary action. Motive is, to voluntary action in the human mind, what cause is to effect in the material universe. The word liberty, as applied to

[1] Cabanis, Rapports du Physique et du Moral de l'Homme, vol. ii, page 406.

[2] Lettres sur les Sciences, à Voltaire.—Bailly.

mind, is analogous to the word chance, as applied to matter: they spring from an ignorance of the certainty of the conjunction of antecedents and consequents.

Every human being is irresistibly impelled to act precisely as he does act: in the eternity which preceded his birth a chain of causes was generated, which, operating under the name of motives, make it impossible that any thought of his mind, or any action of his life, should be otherwise than it is. Were the doctrine of Necessity false, the human mind would no longer be a legitimate object of science; from like causes it would be in vain that we should expect like effects; the strongest motive would no longer be paramount over the conduct; all knowledge would be vague and undeterminate; we could not predict with any certainty that we might not meet as an enemy to-morrow him with whom we have parted in friendship to-night; the most probable inducements and the clearest reasonings would lose the invariable influence they possess. The contrary of this is demonstrably the fact. Similar circumstances produce the same unvariable effects. The precise character and motives of any man on any occasion being given, the moral philosopher could predict his actions with as much certainty as the natural philosopher could predict the effects of the mixture of any particular chemical substances. Why is the aged husbandman more experienced than the young beginner? Because there is a uniform, undeniable necessity in the operations of the material universe. Why is the old statesman more skilful than the raw politician? Because, relying on the necessary conjunction of motive and action, he proceeds to produce moral effects, by the application of those moral causes which experience has shown to be effectual. Some actions may be found to which we can attach no motives, but these are the effects of causes with which we are unacquainted. Hence the relation which motive bears to voluntary action is that of cause to effect; nor, placed in this point of view, is it, or ever has it been the subject of popular or philosophical dispute. None but the few fanatics who are engaged in the herculean task of reconciling the justice of their God with the misery of man, will longer outrage common sense by the supposition of an event without a cause, a voluntary action without a motive. History, politics, morals, criticism, all grounds of reasonings, all principles of science, alike assume the truth of the doctrine of Necessity. No farmer carrying his corn to market doubts the sale of it at the market price. The master of a manufactory no more doubts that he can purchase the human labour necessary for his purposes, than that his machinery will act as they have been accustomed to act.

But, whilst none have scrupled to admit necessity as influencing matter, many have disputed its dominion over mind. Independently of its militating with the received ideas of the justice of God, it is by no means obvious to a superficial inquiry. When the mind observes its own operations, it feels no connection of motive and action: but as we know «nothing more of causation than the constant conjunction of objects and the consequent inference of one from the other, as we find that these two circumstances are universally allowed to have place in voluntary action, we may be easily led to own that they are subjected to the necessity common to all causes.» The actions of the will have a regular conjunction with circumstances and characters; motive is, to voluntary action, what cause is to effect. But the only idea we can form of causation is a constant conjunction of similar objects, and the consequent inference of one from the other: wherever this is the case necessity is clearly established.

The idea of liberty, applied metaphorically to the will, has sprung from a misconception of the meaning of the word power. What is power?—*id quod potest*, that which can produce any given effect. To deny power, is to say that nothing can or has the power to be or act. In the only true sense of the word power, it applies with equal force to the loadstone as to the human will. Do you think these motives, which I shall present, are powerful enough to rouse him? is a question just as common as, Do you think this lever has the power of raising this weight? The advocates of free-will assert that the will has the power of refusing to be determined by the strongest motive: but the strongest motive is that which, overcoming all others, ultimately prevails; this assertion therefore amounts to a denial of the will being ultimately determined by that motive which does determine it, which is absurd. But it is equally certain that a man cannot resist the strongest motive, as that he cannot overcome a physical impossibility.

The doctrine of Necessity tends to introduce a great change into the established notions of morality, and utterly to destroy religion. Reward and punishment must be considered, by the Necessarian, merely as motives which he would employ in order to procure the adoption or abandonment of any given line of conduct. Desert, in the present sense of the word, would no longer have any meaning; and he, who should inflict pain upon another for no better reason than that he deserved it, would only gratify his revenge under pretence of satisfying justice. It is not enough, says the advocate of free-will, that a criminal should be prevented from a repetition of his crimes; he should feel pain, and his torments, when justly inflicted, ought precisely to be proportioned to his fault. But utility is morality; that which is incapable of producing happiness is useless; and though the crime of Damiens must be condemned, yet the frightful torments which revenge, under the name of justice, inflicted on this unhappy man, cannot be supposed to have augmented, even at the long-run, the stock of pleasurable sensation in the world. At the same time, the doctrine of Necessity does not in the least diminish our disapprobation of vice. The conviction which all feel, that a viper is a poisonous animal, and that a tiger is constrained, by the inevitable condition of his existence, to devour men, does not induce us to avoid them less sedulously, or, even more, to hesitate in destroying them: but he would surely be of a hard heart, who, meeting with a serpent on a desert island, or in a situation where it was incapable of injury, should wantonly deprive it of existence. A Necessarian is inconsequent to his own principles, if he indulges in hatred or contempt; the compassion which he feels for the criminal is unmixed with a desire of injuring him: he looks with an elevated and dreadless composure upon the links of the universal chain as they pass before his eyes; whilst cowardice, curiosity and inconsistency only assail him in proportion to the feebleness and indistinctness with which he has perceived and rejected the delusions of free-will.

Religion is the perception of the relation in which

we stand to the principle of the universe. But if the principle of the universe be not an organic being, the model and prototype of man, the relation between it and human beings are absolutely none. Without some insight into its will respecting our actions, religion is nugatory and vain. But will is only a mode of animal mind; moral qualities also are such as only a human being can possess; to attribute them to the principle of the universe, is to annex to it properties incompatible with any possible definition of its nature. It is probable that the word God was originally only an expression denoting the unknown cause of the known events which men perceived in the universe. By the vulgar mistake of a metaphor for a real being, of a word for a thing, it became a man, endowed with human qualities and governing the universe as an earthly monarch governs his kingdom. Their addresses to this imaginary being, indeed, are much in the same style as those of subjects to a king. They acknowledge his benevolence, deprecate his anger, and supplicate his favour.

But the doctrine of Necessity teaches us, that in no case could any event have happened otherwise than it did happen, and that, if God is the author of good, he is also the author of evil; that, if he is entitled to our gratitude for the one, he is entitled to our hatred for the other; that, admitting the existence of this hypothetic being, he is also subjected to the dominion of an immutable necessity. It is plain that the same arguments which prove that God is the author of food, light, and life, prove him also to be the author of poison, darkness, and death. The wide-wasting earthquake, the storm, the battle, and the tyranny, are attributable to this hypothetic being in the same degree as the fairest forms of nature, sunshine, liberty, and peace.

But we are taught, by the doctrine of Necessity, that there is neither good nor evil in the universe, otherwise than as the events to which we apply these epithets have relation to our own peculiar mode of being. Still less than with the hypothesis of a God, will the doctrine of Necessity accord with the belief of a future state of punishment. God made man such as he is, and then damned him for being so: for to say that God was the author of all good, and man the author of all evil, is to say that one man made a straight line and a crooked one, and another man made the incongruity.

A Mahometan story, much to the present purpose, is recorded, wherein Adam and Moses are introduced disputing before God in the following manner. Thou, says Moses, art Adam, whom God created, and animated with the breath of life, and caused to be worshipped by the angels, and placed in Paradise, from whence mankind have been expelled for thy fault. Whereto Adam answered, Thou art Moses, whom God chose for his apostle, and entrusted with his word, by giving thee the tables of the law, and whom he vouchsafed to admit to discourse with himself. How many years dost thou find the law was written before I was created? Says Moses, Forty. And dost thou not find, replied Adam, these words therein, And Adam rebelled against his Lord and transgressed? Which Moses confessing, Dost thou therefore blame me, continued he, for doing that which God wrote of me that I should do, forty years before I was created; nay, for what was decreed concerning me fifty thousand years before the creation of heaven and earth?—SALE'S *Prelim. Disc. to the Koran, page* 164.

Note 13, page 117, col. 1.

There is no God!

This negation must be understood solely to affect a creative Deity. The hypothesis of a pervading Spirit coeternal with the universe, remains unshaken.

A close examination of the validity of the proofs adduced to support any proposition, is the only secure way of attaining truth, on the advantages of which it is unnecessary to descant: our knowledge of the existence of a Deity is a subject of such importance, that it cannot be too minutely investigated; in consequence of this conviction we proceed briefly and impartially to examine the proofs which have been adduced. It is necessary first to consider the nature of belief.

When a proposition is offered to the mind, it perceives the agreement or disagreement of the ideas of which it is composed. A perception of their agreement is termed *belief*. Many obstacles frequently prevent this perception from being immediate; these the mind attempts to remove, in order that the perception may be distinct. The mind is active in the investigation, in order to perfect the state of perception of the relation which the component ideas of the proposition bear to each, which is passive: the investigation being confused with the perception, has induced many falsely to imagine that the mind is active in belief,—that belief is an act of volition,—in consequence of which it may be regulated by the mind. Pursuing, continuing this mistake, they have attached a degree of criminality to disbelief; of which, in its nature, it is incapable: it is equally incapable of merit.

Belief, then, is a passion, the strength of which, like every other passion, is in precise proportion to the degrees of excitement.

The degrees of excitement are three.

The senses are the sources of all knowledge to the mind; consequently their evidence claims the strongest assent.

The decision of the mind, founded upon our own experience, derived from these sources, claims the next degree.

The experience of others, which addresses itself to the former one, occupies the lowest degree.

(A graduated scale, on which should be marked the capabilities of propositions to approach to the test of the senses, would be a just barometer of the belief which ought to be attached to them.)

Consequently no testimony can be admitted which is contrary to reason; reason is founded on the evidence of our senses.

Every proof may be referred to one of these three divisions: it is to be considered what arguments we receive from each of them, which should convince us of the existence of a Deity.

1st. The evidence of the senses. If the Deity should appear to us, if he should convince our senses of his existence, this revelation would necessarily command belief. Those to whom the Deity has thus appeared have the strongest possible conviction of his existence. But the God of Theologians is incapable of local visibility.

2d. Reason. It is urged that man knows that whatever is, must either have had a beginning, or have existed from all eternity: he also knows, that whatever is not eternal must have had a cause. When this reasoning is applied to the universe, it is necessary to

prove that it was created: until that is clearly demonstrated, we may reasonably suppose that it has endured from all eternity. We must prove design before we can infer a designer. The only idea which we can form of causation is derivable from the constant conjunction of objects, and the consequent inference of one from the other. In a case where two propositions are diametrically opposite, the mind believes that which is least incomprehensible;—it is easier to suppose that the universe has existed from all eternity, than to conceive a being beyond its limits capable of creating it: if the mind sinks beneath the weight of one, is it an alleviation to increase the intolerability of the burthen?

The other argument, which is founded on a man's knowledge of his own existence, stands thus. A man knows not only that he now is, but that once he was not; consequently there must have been a cause. But our idea of causation is alone derivable from the constant conjunction of objects and the consequent inference of one from the other; and, reasoning experimentally, we can only infer from effects, causes exactly adequate to those effects. But there certainly is a generative power which is effected by certain instruments: we cannot prove that it is inherent in these instruments; nor is the contrary hypothesis capable of demonstration: we admit that the generative power is incomprehensible; but to suppose that the same effect is produced by an eternal, omniscient, omnipotent, being, leaves the cause in the same obscurity, but renders it more incomprehensible.

3d. Testimony. It is required that testimony should not be contrary to reason. The testimony that the Deity convinces the senses of men of his existence can only be admitted by us, if our mind considers it less probable that these men should have been deceived, than that the Deity should have appeared to them. Our reason can never admit the testimony of men, who not only declare that they were eye-witnesses of miracles, but that the Deity was irrational; for he commanded that he should be believed, he proposed the highest rewards for faith, eternal punishments for disbelief. We can only command voluntary actions; belief is not an act of volition; the mind is even passive, or involuntarily active: from this it is evident that we have no sufficient testimony, or rather that testimony is insufficient to prove the being of a God. It has been before shown that it cannot be deduced from reason. They alone, then, who have been convinced by the evidence of the senses, can believe it.

Hence it is evident that, having no proofs from either of the three sources of conviction, the mind *cannot* believe the existence of a creative God: it is also evident, that, as belief is a passion of the mind, no degree of criminality is attachable to disbelief; and that they only are reprehensible who neglect to remove the false medium through which their mind views any subject of discussion. Every reflecting mind must acknowledge that there is no proof of the existence of a Deity.

God is an hypothesis, and, as such, stands in need of proof: the *onus probandi* rests on the theist. Sir Isaac Newton says: «Hypotheses non fingo, quicquid enim ex phænomenis non deducitur, hypothesis vocanda est, et hypothesis vel meta physicæ, vel physicæ, vel qualitatum occultarum, seu mechanicæ, in philosophiâ locum non habent.» To all proofs of the existence of a creative God apply this valuable rule. We see a variety of bodies possessing a variety of powers: we merely know their effects; we are in a state of ignorance with respect to their essences and causes. These Newton calls the phenomena of things; but the pride of philosophy is unwilling to admit its ignorance of their causes. From the phenomena, which are the objects of our senses, we attempt to infer a cause, which we call God, and gratuitously endow it with all negative and contradictory qualities. From this hypothesis we invent this general name, to conceal our ignorance of causes and essences. The being called God by no means answers with the conditions prescribed by Newton; it bears every mark of a veil woven by philosophical conceit, to hide the ignorance of philosophers even from themselves. They borrow the threads of its texture from the anthropomorphism of the vulgar. Words have been used by sophists for the same purposes, from the occult qualities of the peripatetics to the *effluvium* of Boyle and the *crinities* or *nebulæ* of Herschel. God is represented as infinite, eternal, incomprehensible; he is contained under every prædicate in non that the logic of ignorance could fabricate. Even his worshippers allow that it is impossible to form any idea of him: they exclaim with the French poet,

Pour dire ce qu'il est, il faut être lui-même.

Lord Bacon says, that «atheism leaves to man reason, philosophy, natural piety, laws, reputation, and every thing that can serve to conduct him to virtue; but superstition destroys all these, and erects itself into a tyranny over the understandings of men: hence atheism never disturbs the government, but renders man more clear-sighted, since he sees nothing beyond the boundaries of the present life.» — Bacon's *Moral Essays*.

La première théologie de l'homme lui fit d'abord craindre et adorer les éléments même, des objets matériels et grossiers; il rendit ensuite ses hommages à des agents présidents aux éléments, à des génies inférieurs, à des héros, ou à des hommes doués de grandes qualités. A force de réfléchir, il crut simplifier les choses en soumettant la nature entière à un seul agent, à un esprit, à une ame universelle, qui mettoit cette nature et ses parties en mouvement. En remontant des causes en causes, les mortels ont fini par ne rien voir; et c'est dans cette obscurité qu'ils ont placé leur Dieu; c'est dans cet abyme ténébreux que leur imagination inquiète travaille toujours à se fabriquer des chimères, qui les affligeront jusqu'à ce que la connoissance de la nature les détrompe des fantômes qu'ils ont toujours si vainement adorés.

Si nous voulons nous rendre compte de nos idées sur la Divinité, nous serons obligés de convenir que, par le mot *Dieu*, les hommes n'ont jamais pu désigner que la cause la plus cachée, la plus éloignée, la plus inconnue des effets qu'ils voyoient: ils ne font usage de ce mot, que lorsque le jeu des causes naturelles et connues cesse d'être visible pour eux; dès qu'ils perdent le fil de ces causes, ou dès que leur esprit ne peut plus en suivre la chaîne, ils tranchent leur difficulté, et terminent leur recherches en appellant Dieu la dernière des causes, c'est-à-dire celle qui est au-delà de toutes les causes qu'ils connoissent; ainsi ils ne font qu'assigner une dénomination vague à une cause ignorée, à laquelle leur paresse ou les bornes de leurs connoissances les forcent de s'arrêter. Toutes les fois qu'on nous dit que Dieu est l'auteur de quelque phénomène, cela signifie qu'on ignore comment un tel phénomène a pu s'opérer

par le secours des forces ou des causes que nous connoissons dans la nature. C'est ainsi que le commun des hommes, dont l'ignorance est le partage, attribue à la Divinité non seulement les effets inusités qui les frappent, mais encore les événemens les plus simples, dont les causes sont les plus faciles à connoître pour quiconque a pu les méditer. En un mot, l'homme a toujours respecté les causes inconnues des effets surprenans, que son ignorance l'empêchoit de démêler. Ce fut sur les débuts de la nature que les hommes élevèrent le colosse imaginaire de la Divinité.

Si l'ignorance de la nature donna la naissance aux dieux, la connoissance de la nature est faite pour les détruire. A mesure que l'homme s'instruit, ses forces et ses ressources augmentent avec ses lumières; les sciences, les arts conservateurs, l'industrie, lui fournissent des secours; l'expérience le rassure ou lui procure des moyens de résister aux efforts de bien des causes qui cessent de l'alarmer dès qu'il les a connues. En un mot, ses terreurs se dissipent dans la même proportion que son esprit s'éclaire. L'homme instruit cesse d'être superstitieux.

Ce n'est jamais que sur parole que des peuples entiers adorent le Dieu de leurs pères et de leurs prêtres: l'autorité, la confiance, la soumission, et l'habitude, leur tiennent lieu de conviction et de preuves; ils se prosternent et prient, parce que leurs pères leur ont appris à se prosterner et prier: mais pourquoi ceux-ci se sont-ils mis à genoux? C'est que dans les temps éloignés leurs législateurs et leurs guides leur en ont fait un devoir. « Adorez et croyez, » ont-ils dit, « des dieux que vous ne pouvez comprendre; rapportez-vous en à notre sagesse profonde; nous en savons plus que vous sur la Divinité. » Mais pourquoi m'en rapporterois-je à vous? C'est que Dieu le veut ainsi, c'est que Dieu vous punira si vous osez résister. Mais ce Dieu n'est-il donc pas la chose en question? Cependant les hommes se sont toujours payés de ce cercle vicieux; la paresse de leur esprit leur fit trouver plus court de s'en rapporter au jugement des autres. Toutes les notions religieuses sont fondées uniquement sur l'autorité; toutes les religions du monde défendent l'examen et ne veulent pas que l'on raisonne; c'est l'autorité qui veut qu'on croye en Dieu; ce Dieu n'est lui-même fondé que sur l'autorité de quelques hommes qui prétendent le connoître, et venir de sa part pour l'annoncer à la terre. Un Dieu fait par les hommes, a sans doute besoin des hommes pour se faire connoître aux hommes.

Ne seroit-ce donc que pour des prêtres, des inspirés, des métaphysiciens que seroit réservée la conviction de l'existence d'un Dieu, que l'on dit néanmoins si nécessaire à tout le genre humain? Mais trouvons-nous de l'harmonie entre les opinions théologiques des différens inspirés, ou des penseurs répandus sur la terre? Ceux mêmes qui font profession d'adorer le même Dieu, sont-ils d'accord sur son compte? Sont-ils contents des preuves que leurs collègues apportent de son existence? Souscrivent-ils unanimement aux idées qu'ils présentent sur sa nature, sur sa conduite, sur la façon d'entendre ses prétendus oracles? Est-il une contrée sur la terre, où la science de Dieu se soit réellement perfectionnée? A-t-elle pris quelque part la consistance et l'uniformité que nous voyons prendre aux connoissances humaines, aux arts les plus futiles, aux métiers les plus méprisés? Des mots *d'esprit, d'immatérialité,* de *création,* de *prédestination,* de *grace;* cette foule de distinctions subtiles dont la théologie s'est partout remplie dans quelques pays, ces inventions si ingénieuses, imaginées par des penseurs qui se sont succédés depuis tant de siècles, n'ont fait, hélas! qu'embrouiller les choses, et jamais la science la plus nécessaire aux hommes n'a jusqu'ici pu acquérir la moindre fixité. Depuis des milliers d'années, ces rêveurs oisifs se sont perpétuellement relayés pour méditer la Divinité, pour deviner ses voies cachées, pour inventer des hypothèses propres à développer cette énigme importante. Leur peu de succès n'a point découragé la vanité théologique; toujours on a parlé de Dieu: on s'est égorgé pour lui, et cet être sublime demeure toujours le plus ignoré et le plus discuté.

Les hommes auroient été trop heureux, si, se bornant aux objets visibles qui les intéressent, ils eussent employé à perfectionner leurs sciences réelles, leurs lois, leur morale, leur éducation, la moitié des efforts qu'ils ont mis dans leurs recherches sur la Divinité. Ils auroient été bien plus sages encore, et plus fortunés, s'ils eussent pu consentir à laisser leurs guides désœuvrés se quereller entre eux, et sonder des profondeurs capables de les étourdir, sans se mêler de leurs disputes insensées. Mais il est de l'essence de l'ignorance d'attacher de l'importance à ce qu'elle ne comprends pas. La vanité humaine fait que l'esprit se roidit contre les difficultés. Plus un objet se dérobe à nos yeux, plus nous faisons d'efforts pour le saisir, parceque dès-lors il aiguillonne notre orgueil, il excite notre curiosité, il nous paroît intéressant. En combattant pour son Dieu chacun ne combattit en effet que pour les intérêts de sa propre vanité, qui de toutes les passions produits par la mal organisation de la société, est la plus prompte à s'alarmer, et la plus propre à produire de très grandes folies.

Si écartant pour un moment les idées fâcheuses que la théologie nous donne d'un Dieu capricieux, dont les décrets partiaux et despotiques décident du sort des humains, nous ne voulons fixer nos yeux que sur la bonté prétendue, que tous les hommes, même en tremblant devant ce Dieu, s'accordent à lui donner; si nous lui supposons le projet qu'on lui prête, de n'avoir travaillé que pour sa propre gloire; d'exiger les hommages des êtres intelligens; de ne chercher dans ses œuvres que le bien-être du genre humain; comment concilier ses vues et ses dispositions avec l'ignorance vraiment invincible dans laquelle ce Dieu, si glorieux et si bon, laisse la plupart des hommes sur son compte? Si Dieu veut être connu, chéri, remercié, que ne se montre-t-il sous des traits favorables à tous ces êtres intelligens dont il veut être aimé et adoré? Pourquoi ne point se manifester à toute la terre d'une façon non équivoque, bien plus capable de nous convaincre, que ces révélations particulières qui semblent accuser la Divinité d'une partialité fâcheuse pour quelques unes de ses créatures? Le Tout-Puissant n'auroit-il donc pas des moyens plus convainquans de se montrer aux hommes que ces métamorphoses ridicules, ces incarnations prétendues, qui nous sont attestées par des écrivains si peu d'accord entre eux dans les récits qu'ils en font? Au lieu de tant de miracles inventés pour prouver la mission divine de tant de législateurs révérés par les différens peuples du monde, le souverain des esprits ne pouvoit-il pas convaincre tout d'un coup l'esprit humain des choses qu'il a voulu lui faire connoître? Au lieu de suspendre un soleil dans la voûte du firmament; au lieu de répandre sans ordre les étoiles et les constellations qui remplissent l'espace,

n'eut-il pas été plus conforme aux vues d'un Dieu jaloux de sa gloire et si bien intentionné pour l'homme, d'écrire d'une façon non sujette à dispute, son nom, ses attributs, ses volontés permanentes en caractères ineffaçables et lisible également pour tous les habitans de la terre? Personne alors n'auroit pu douter de l'existence d'un Dieu, de ses volontés claires, de ses intentions visibles. Sous les yeux de ce Dieu si terrible personne n'auroit eu l'audace de violer ses ordonnances; nul mortel n'eût osé se mettre dans le cas d'attirer sa colère; enfin nul homme n'eût eu le front d'en imposer en son nom, ou d'interpréter ses volontés suivant ses propres fantaisies.

En effet, quand même on admettroit l'existence du Dieu théologique, et la réalité des attributs si discordans qu'on lui donne, l'on ne peut en rien conclure, pour autoriser la conduite ou les cultes qu'on prescrit de lui rendre. La théologie est vraiment *le tonneau des Danaïdes*. A force de qualités contradictoires et d'assertions hasardées, elle a, pour ainsi dire, tellement garoté son Dieu qu'elle l'a mis dans l'impossibilité d'agir. S'il est infiniment bon, qu'elle raison aurions nous de le craindre? S'il est infiniment sage, de quoi nous inquiéter sur notre sort? S'il sait tout, pourquoi l'avertir de nos besoins, et le fatiguer de nos prières? S'il est partout, pourquoi lui élever des temples? S'il est maître de tout, pourquoi lui faire des sacrifices et des offrandes? S'il est juste, comment croire qu'il punisse des créatures qu'il a remplies de foiblesses? Si la grace fait tout en elles, quelle raison auroit-il de les récompenser? S'il est tout-puissant, comment l'offenser, comment lui résister? S'il est raisonnable, comment se mettroit-il en colère contre des avengles, à qui il a laissé la liberté de déraisonner! S'il est immuable, de quel droit prétendrions-nous faire changer ses décrets? S'il est inconcevable, pourquoi nous en occuper? S'IL A PARLÉ, POURQUOI L'UNIVERS N'EST-IL PAS CONVAINCU? Si la connoissance d'un Dieu est la plus nécessaire, pourquoi n'est-elle pas la plus évidente, et la plus claire?—*Système de la Nature. London*, 1781.

The enlightened and benevolent Pliny thus publicly professes himself an atheist:—Quapropter effigiem Dei, formamque quærere, imbecillitatis humanæ reor. Quisquis est Deus (si modo est alius) et quacunque in parte, totus est sensus, totus est visus, totus auditus, totus animæ, totus animi, totus sui. * * * * * Imperfectæ vero in homine naturæ præcipua solatia ne deum quidem posse omnia. Namque nec sibi potest mortem consciscere, si velit, quod homini dedit optimum in tantis vita pœnis: nec mortales æternitate donare, aut revocare defunctos; nec facere ut qui vixit non vixerit, qui honores gessit non gesserit, nullumque habere in præteritum jus, præterquam oblivionis, atque ut facetis quoque argumentis societas hæc cum deo copuletur, ut bis dena viginta non sint, et multa similiter efficere non posse.—Per quæ, declaratur haud dubie, naturæ potentiam id quoque esse, quod Deum vocamus. —PLIN. *Nat. Hist. cap. de Deo.*

The consistent Newtonian is necessarily an atheist. See Sir W. DRUMMOND'S *Academical Questions, chap.* iii. —Sir W. seems to consider the atheism to which it leads, as a sufficient presumption of the falsehood of the system of gravitation: but surely it is more consistent with the good faith of philosophy to admit a deduction from facts than an hypothesis incapable of proof, although it might militate with the obstinate preconceptions of the simob. Had this author, instead of inveighing against the guilt and absurdity of atheism, demonstrated its falsehood, his conduct would have been more suited to the modesty of the sceptic and the toleration of the philosopher.

Omnia enim per Dei potentiam facta sunt: imo, quia natura potentia nulla est nisi ipsa Dei potentia, artem est nos catemus Dei potentiam non intelligere, quatenus causas naturales ignoramus; adeoque stultæ ad eandem Dei potentiam recurritur, quando rei alicujus, causam naturalem, sive est, ipsam Dei potentiam ignoramus.—SPINOSA, *Tract. Theologico-Pol. chap.* i, *page* 14.

Note 14, page 117, col. 2.

Ahasuerus, rise!

«Ahasuerus the Jew crept forth from the dark cave of Mount Carmel. Near two thousand years have elapsed since he was first goaded by never-ending restlessness to rove the globe from pole to pole. When our Lord was wearied with the burthen of his ponderous cross, and wanted to rest before the door of Ahasuerus, the unfeeling wretch drove him away with brutality. The Saviour of mankind staggered, sinking under the heavy load, but uttered no complaint. An angel of death appeared before Ahasuerus, and exclaimed indignantly, 'Barbarian! thou hast denied rest to the Son of Man: be it denied thee also, until he comes to judge the world.'

«A black demon, let loose from hell upon Ahasuerus, goads him now from country to country: he is denied the consolation which death affords, and precluded from the rest of the peaceful grave.

«Ahasuerus crept forth from the dark cave of Mount Carmel— he shook the dust from his beard—and taking up one of the sculls heaped there, hurled it down the eminence: it rebounded from the earth in shivered atoms. This was my father! roared Ahasuerus. Seven more sculls rolled down from rock to rock; while the infuriate Jew, following them with ghastly looks, exclaimed—And these were my wives! He still continued to hurl down scull after scull, roaring in dreadful accents—And these, and these, and these were my children! They *could die;* but I! reprobate wretch, alas! I cannot die! Dreadful beyond conception is the judgment that hangs over me. Jerusalem fell—I crushed the sucking babe, and precipitated myself into the destructive flames. I cursed the Romans—but, alas! alas! the restless curse held me by the hair,—and I could not die!

«Rome the giantess fell—I placed myself before the falling statue—she fell, and did not crush me. Nations sprung up and disappeared before me;—but I remained and did not die. From cloud-encircled cliffs did I precipitate myself into the ocean; but the foaming billows cast me upon the shore, and the burning arrow of existence pierced my cold heart again. I leaped into Etna's flaming abyss, and roared with the giants for ten long months, polluting with my groans the Mount's sulphureous mouth—ah! ten long months. The volcano fermented, and in a fiery stream of lava cast me up. I lay torn by the torture-snakes of hell amid the glowing cinders, and yet continued to exist.—A forest was on fire: I darted on wings of fury and despair into the crackling wood. Fire dropped upon me from the trees, but the flames only singed my limbs; alas! it could not consume them.—I now mixed with the butchers of

mankind, and plunged in the tempest of the raging battle. I roared defiance to the infuriate Gaul, defiance to the victorious German; but arrows and spears rebounded in shivers from my body. The Saracen's flaming sword broke upon my scull: balls in vain hissed upon me: the lightnings of battle glared harmless around my loins: in vain did the elephant trample on me, in vain the iron hoof of the wrathful steed! The mine, big with destructive power, burst upon me, and hurled me high in the air—I fell on heaps of smoking limbs, but was only singed. The giant's steel club rebounded from my body; the executioner's hand could not strangle me, the tiger's tooth could not pierce me, nor would the hungry lion in the circus devour me. I cohabited with poisonous snakes, and pinched the red crest of the dragon. The serpent stung, but could not destroy me.—The dragon tormented, but dared not to devour me.—I now provoked the fury of tyrants: I said to Nero, Thou art a bloodhound! I said to Christiern, Thou art a bloodhound! I said to Muley Ismail, Thou art a bloodhound!—The tyrants invented cruel torments, but did not kill me.————Ha! not to be able to die—not to be able to die—not to be permitted to rest after the toils of life—to be doomed to be imprisoned for ever in the clay-formed dungeon—to be for ever clogged with this worthless body, its load of diseases and infirmities—to be condemned to hold for milleniums that yawning monster Sameness, and Time, that hungry hyena, ever bearing children, and ever devouring again her offspring!—Ha! not to be permitted to die! Awful avenger in heaven, hast thou in thine armoury of wrath a punishment more dreadful? then let it thunder upon me, command a hurricane to sweep me down to the foot of Carmel, that I there may lie extended; may pant, and writhe, and die!»

This fragment is the translation of part of some German work, whose title I have vainly endeavoured to discover. I picked it up, dirty and torn, some years ago, in Lincoln's-Inn Fields.

Note 15, page 118, col. 1.

I will beget a Son, and he shall bear
The sins of all the world.

A book is put into our hands when children, called the Bible, the purport of whose history is briefly this: That God made the earth in six days, and there planted a delightful garden, in which he placed the first pair of human beings. In the midst of the garden he planted a tree, whose fruit, although within their reach, they were forbidden to touch. That the Devil, in the shape of a snake, persuaded them to eat of this fruit; in consequence of which God condemned both them and their posterity yet unborn, to satisfy his justice by their eternal misery. That, four thousand years after these events (the human race in the mean while having gone unredeemed to perdition), God engendered with the betrothed wife of a carpenter in Judea (whose virginity was nevertheless uninjured), and begat a Son, whose name was Jesus Christ; and who was crucified and died, in order that no more men might be devoted to hell-fire, he bearing the burthen of his Father's displeasure by proxy. The book states, in addition, that the soul of whoever disbelieves this sacrifice will be burned with everlasting fire.

During many ages of misery and darkness this story gained implicit belief; but at length men arose who suspected that it was a fable and imposture, and that Jesus Christ, so far from being a God, was only a man like themselves. But a numerous set of men, who derived and still derive immense emoluments from this opinion, in the shape of a popular belief, told the vulgar, that, if they did not believe in the Bible, they would be damned to all eternity; and burned, imprisoned, and poisoned all the unbiassed and unconnected inquirers who occasionally arose. They still oppress them, so far as the people, now become more enlightened, will allow.

The belief in all that the Bible contains, is called Christianity. A Roman governor of Judea, at the instances of a priest-led mob, crucified a man called Jesus eighteen centuries ago. He was a man of pure life, who desired to rescue his countrymen from the tyranny of their barbarous and degrading superstitions. The common fate of all who desire to benefit mankind awaited him. The rabble, at the instigation of the priests, demanded his death, although his very judge made public acknowledgment of his innocence. Jesus was sacrificed to the honour of that God with whom he was afterwards confounded. It is of importance, therefore, to distinguish between the pretended character of this being as the Son of God and the Saviour of the world, and his real character as a man, who, for a vain attempt to reform the world, paid the forfeit of his life to that overbearing tyranny which has since so long desolated the universe in his name. Whilst the one is a hypocritical demon, who announces himself as the God of compassion and peace, even whilst he stretches forth his blood-red hand with the sword of discord to waste the earth, having confessedly devised this scheme of desolation from eternity; the other stands in the foremost list of those true heroes, who have died in the glorious martyrdom of liberty, and have braved torture, contempt, and poverty, in the cause of suffering humanity.[1]

The vulgar, ever in extremes, became persuaded that the crucifixion of Jesus was a supernatural event. Testimonies of miracles, so frequent in unenlightened ages, were not wanting to prove that he was something divine. This belief, rolling through the lapse of ages, met with the reveries of Plato and the reasonings of Aristotle, and acquired force and extent, until the divinity of Jesus became a dogma, which to dispute was death, which to doubt was infamy.

Christianity is now the established religion: he who attempts to impugn it, must be contented to behold murderers and traitors take precedence of him in public opinion: though, if his genius be equal to his courage, and assisted by a peculiar coalition of circumstances, future ages may exalt him to a divinity, and persecute others in his name, as he was persecuted in the name of his predecessor in the homage of the world.

The same means that have supported every other popular belief, have supported Christianity. War, imprisonment, assassination, and falsehood; deeds of unexampled and incomparable atrocity have made it what it is. The blood shed by the votaries of the God of mercy and peace, since the establishment of his religion, would probably suffice to drown all other sectaries now on the habitable globe. We derive from our ancestors a faith thus fostered and supported: we quarrel, persecute, and hate for its maintenance. Even under a

[1] Since writing this note, I have seen reason to suspect that Jesus was an ambitious man, who aspired to the throne of Judea.

government which, whilst it infringes the very right of thought and speech, boasts of permitting the liberty of the press, a man is pilloried and imprisoned because he is a deist, and no one raises his voice in the indignation of outraged humanity. But it is ever a proof that the falsehood of a proposition is felt by those who use coercion, not reasoning, to procure its admission; and a dispassionate observer would feel himself more powerfully interested in favour of a man, who, depending on the truth of his opinions, simply stated his reasons for entertaining them, than in that of his aggressor, who daringly avowing his unwillingness or incapacity to answer them by argument, proceeded to repress the energies and break the spirit of their promulgator by that torture and imprisonment whose infliction he could command.

Analogy seems to favour the opinion, that as, like other systems, Christianity has arisen and augmented, so like them it will decay and perish; that, as violence, darkness, and deceit, not reasoning and persuasion, have procured its admission among mankind, so, when enthusiasm has subsided, and time, that infallible controverter of false opinions, has involved its pretended evidences in the darkness of antiquity, it will become obsolete; that Milton's poem alone will give permanency to the remembrance of its absurdities; and that men will laugh as heartily at grace, faith, redemption, and original sin, as they now do at the metamorphoses of Jupiter, the miracles of Romish saints, the efficacy of witchcraft, and the appearance of departed spirits.

Had the Christian religion commenced and continued by the mere force of reasoning and persuasion, the preceding analogy would be inadmissible. We should never speculate on the future obsoleteness of a system perfectly conformable to nature and reason: it would endure so long as they endured; it would be a truth as indisputable as the light of the sun, the criminality of murder, and other facts, whose evidence, depending on our organization and relative situations, must remain acknowledged as satisfactory so long as man is man. It is an incontrovertible fact, the consideration of which ought to repress the hasty conclusions of credulity, or moderate its obstinacy in maintaining them, that, had the Jews not been a fanatical race of men, had even the resolution of Pontius Pilate been equal to his candour, the Christian religion never could have prevailed, it could not even have existed: on so feeble a thread hangs the most cherished opinion of a sixth of the human race! When will the vulgar learn humility? When will the pride of ignorance blush at having believed before it could comprehend?

Either the Christian religion is true, or it is false: if true, it comes from God, and its authenticity can admit of doubt and dispute no further than its omnipotent author is willing to allow. Either the power or the goodness of God is called in question, if he leaves those doctrines most essential to the well-being of man in doubt and dispute; the only ones which, since their promulgation, have been the subject of unceasing cavil, the cause of irreconcileable hatred. *If God has spoken, why is the universe not convinced?*

There is this passage in the Christian Scriptures: « Those who obey not God, and believe not the Gospel of his Son, shall be punished with everlasting destruction.» This is the pivot upon which all religions turn: they all assume that it is in our power to believe or not to believe; whereas the mind can only believe that which it thinks true. A human being can only be supposed accountable for those actions which are influenced by his will. But belief is utterly distinct from and unconnected with volition: it is the apprehension of the agreement or disagreement of the ideas that compose any proposition. Belief is a passion, or involuntary operation of the mind, and, like other passions, its intensity is precisely proportionate to the degrees of excitement. Volition is essential to merit or demerit. But the Christian religion attaches the highest possible degrees of merit and demerit to that which is worthy of neither, and which is totally unconnected with the peculiar faculty of the mind, whose presence is essential to their being.

Christianity was intended to reform the world: had an all-wise Being planned it, nothing is more improbable than that it should have failed: omniscience would infallibly have foreseen the inutility of a scheme which experience demonstrates, to this age, to have been utterly unsuccessful.

Christianity inculcates the necessity of supplicating the Deity. Prayer may be considered under two points of view;—as an endeavour to change the intentions of God, or as a formal testimony of our obedience. But the former case supposes that the caprices of a limited intelligence can occasionally instruct the Creator of the world how to regulate the universe; and the latter, a certain degree of servility analogous to the loyalty demanded by earthly tyrants. Obedience indeed is only the pitiful and cowardly egotism of him who thinks that he can do something better than reason.

Christianity, like all other religions, rests upon miracles, prophecies, and martyrdoms. No religion ever existed, which had not its prophets, its attested miracles, and, above all, crowds of devotees who would bear patiently the most horrible tortures to prove its authenticity. It should appear that in no case can a discriminating mind subscribe to the genuineness of a miracle. A miracle is an infraction of nature's law, by a supernatural cause; by a cause acting beyond that eternal circle within which all things are included. God breaks through the law of nature, that he may convince mankind of the truth of that revelation which, in spite of his precautions, has been, since its introduction, the subject of unceasing schism and cavil.

Miracles resolve themselves into the following question: [1]—Whether it is more probable the laws of nature, hitherto so immutably harmonious, should have undergone violation, or that a man should have told a lie? Whether it is more probable that we are ignorant of the natural cause of an event, or that we know the supernatural one? That, in old times, when the powers of nature were less known than at present, a certain set of men were themselves deceived, or had some hidden motive for deceiving others; or that God begat a son, who, in his legislation, measuring merit by belief, evidenced himself to be totally ignorant of the powers of the human mind—of what is voluntary, and what is the contrary?

We have many instances of men telling lies;—none of an infraction of nature's laws, those laws of whose government alone we have any knowledge or experience. The records of all nations afford innumerable

[1] See Hume's Essays, vol. ii, page 121.

instances of men deceiving others either from vanity or interest, or themselves being deceived by the limitedness of their views and their ignorance of natural causes: but where is the accredited case of God having come upon earth, to give the lie to his own creations? There would be something truly wonderful in the appearance of a ghost; but the assertion of a child that he saw one as he passed through the church-yard is universally admitted to be less miraculous.

But even supposing that a man should raise a dead body to life before our eyes, and on this fact rest his claim to being considered the son of God;—the Humane Society restores drowned persons, and because it makes no mystery of the method it employs, its members are not mistaken for the sons of God. All that we have a right to infer from our ignorance of the cause of any event is, that we do not know it: had the Mexicans attended to this simple rule when they heard the cannon of the Spaniards, they would not have considered them as gods: the experiments of modern chemistry would have defied the wisest philosophers of ancient Greece and Rome to have accounted for them on natural principles. An author of strong common sense has observed, that « a miracle is no miracle at second-hand;» he might have added, that a miracle is no miracle in any case; for until we are acquainted with all natural causes, we have no reason to imagine others.

There remains to be considered another proof of Christianity—Prophecy. 'A book is written before a certain event, in which this event is foretold; how could the prophet have foreknown it without inspiration? how could he have been inspired without God? The greatest stress is laid on the prophecies of Moses and Hosea on the dispersion of the Jews, and that of Isaiah concerning the coming of the Messiah. The prophecy of Moses is a collection of every possible cursing and blessing; and it is so far from being marvellous that the one of dispersion should have been fulfilled, that it would have been more surprising if, out of all these, none should have taken effect. In Deuteronomy, chap. xxviii, ver. 64, where Moses explicitly foretells the dispersion, he states that they shall there serve gods of wood and stone: «And the Lord shall scatter thee among all people, from the one end of the earth even to the other, *and there thou shalt serve other gods, which neither thou nor thy fathers have known, even gods of wood and stone.*» The Jews are at this day remarkably tenacious of their religion. Moses also declares that they shall be subjected to these causes for disobedience to his ritual: « And it shall come to pass, if thou will not hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe to do all the commandments and statutes which I command you this day, that all these curses shall come upon thee and overtake thee.» Is this the real reason? The third, fourth and fifth chapters of Hosea are a piece of immodest confession. The indelicate type might apply in a hundred senses to a hundred things. The fifty-third chapter of Isaiah is more explicit, yet it does not exceed in clearness the oracles of Delphos. The historical proof, that Moses, Isaiah and Hosea did write when they are said to have written, is far from being clear and circumstantial.

But prophecy requires proof in its character as a miracle; we have no right to suppose that a man foreknew future events from God, until it is demonstrated that he neither could know them by his own exertions, nor that the writings which contain the prediction could possibly have been fabricated after the event pretended to be foretold. It is more probable that writings, pretending to divine inspiration, should have been fabricated after the fulfilment of their pretended prediction, than that they should have really been divinely inspired; when we consider that the latter supposition makes God at once the creator of the human mind and ignorant of its primary powers, particularly as we have numberless instances of false religions, and forged prophecies of things long past, and no accredited case of God having conversed with men directly or indirectly. It is also possible that the description of an event might have foregone its occurrence; but this is far from being a legitimate proof of a divine revelation, as many men, not pretending to the character of a prophet, have nevertheless, in this sense, prophesied.

Lord Chesterfield was never yet taken for a prophet, even by a bishop, yet he uttered this remarkable prediction: « The despotic government of France is screwed up to the highest pitch; a revolution is fast approaching; that revolution, I am convinced, will be radical and sanguinary.» This appeared in the letters of the prophet long before the accomplishment of this wonderful prediction. Now, have these particulars come to pass, or have they not? If they have, how could the Earl have foreknown them without inspiration? If we admit the truth of the Christian religion on testimony such as this, we must admit, on the same strength of evidence, that God has affixed the highest rewards to belief, and the eternal tortures of the never-dying worm to disbelief; both of which have been demonstrated to be involuntary.

The last proof of the Christian religion depends on the influence of the Holy Ghost. Theologians divide the influence of the Holy Ghost into its ordinary and extraordinary modes of operation. The latter is supposed to be that which inspired the Prophets and Apostles; and the former to be the grace of God, which summarily makes known the truth of his revelation, to those whose mind is fitted for its reception by a submissive perusal of his word. Persons convinced in this manner, can do any thing but account for their conviction, describe the time at which it happened, or the manner in which it came upon them. It is supposed to enter the mind by other channels than those of the senses, and therefore professes to be superior to reason founded on their experience.

Admitting, however, the usefulness or possibility of a divine revelation, unless we demolish the foundations of all human knowledge, it is requisite that our reason should previously demonstrate its genuineness; for, before we extinguish the steady ray of reason and common sense, it is fit that we should discover whether we cannot do without their assistance, whether or no there be any other which may suffice to guide us through the labyrinth of life: [1] for, if a man is to be inspired upon all occasions, if he is to be sure of a thing because he is sure, if the ordinary operations of the spirit are not to be considered very extraordinary modes of demonstration, if enthusiasm is to usurp the place of proof, and madness that of sanity, all reasoning is superfluous.

[1] See Locke's Essay on the Human Understanding, book iv, chap. xix, on Enthusiasm.

The Mahometan dies fighting for his prophet, the Indian immolates himself at the chariot-wheels of Brahma, the Hottentot worships an insect, the Negro a bunch of feathers, the Mexican sacrifices human victims! Their degree of conviction, must certainly be very strong: it cannot arise from conviction, it must from feelings, the reward of their prayers. If each of these should affirm, in opposition to the strongest possible arguments, that inspiration carried internal evidence, I fear their inspired brethren, the orthodox Missionaries, would be so uncharitable as to pronounce them obstinate.

Miracles cannot be received as testimonies of a disputed fact, because all human testimony has ever been insufficient to establish the possibility of miracles. That which is incapable of proof itself, is no proof of any thing else. Prophecy has also been rejected by the test of reason. Those, then, who have been actually inspired, are the only true believers in the Christian religion.

Mox numine viso
Virginei tumnere sinus, innuptaque mater
Arcano stupuit compleri viscera partu
Auctorem peritura suum. Mortalia corda
Artificem texere poli, latuitque sub uno
Pectore, qui totum late complectitur orbem.
CLAUDIAN, *Carmen Paschali.*

Does not so monstrous and disgusting an absurdity carry its own infamy and refutation with itself?

Note 16, page 120, col. 2.

Him (still from hope to hope the bliss pursuing,
Which, from the exhaustless lore of human weal
Dawns on the virtuous mind), the thoughts that rise
In time-destroying infiniteness, gift
With self-enshrined eternity, etc.

Time is our consciousness of the succession of ideas in our mind. Vivid sensation, of either pain or pleasure, makes the time seem long, as the common phrase is, because it renders us more acutely conscious of our ideas. If a mind be conscious of a hundred ideas during one minute, by the clock, and of two hundred during another, the latter of these spaces would actually occupy so much greater extent in the mind as two exceed one in quantity. If, therefore, the human mind, by any future improvement of its sensibility, should become conscious of an infinite number of ideas in a minute, that minute would be eternity. I do not hence infer that the actual space between the birth and death of a man will ever be prolonged; but that his sensibility is perfectible, and that the number of ideas which his mind is capable of receiving is indefinite. One man is stretched on the rack during twelve hours; another sleeps soundly in his bed: the difference of time perceived by these two persons is immense; one hardly will believe that half an hour has elapsed, the other could credit that centuries had flown during his agony. Thus, the life of a man of virtue and talent who should die in his thirtieth year, is, with regard to his own feelings, longer than that of a miserable priest-ridden slave, who dreams out a century of dulness. The one has perpetually cultivated his mental faculties, has rendered himself master of his thoughts, can abstract and generalize amid the lethargy of every-day business;—the other can slumber over the brightest moments of his being, and is unable to remember the happiest hour of his life. Perhaps the perishing ephemeron enjoys a longer life than the tortoise.

Dark flood of time!
Roll as it listeth thee—I measure not
By months or moments thy ambignous course.
Another may stand by me on the brink,
And watch the bubble whirl'd beyond his ken
That pauses at my feet. The sense of love,
The thirst for action, and the impassion'd thought,
Prolong my being: if I wake no more,
My life more actual living will contain
Than some grey veteran's of the world's cold school,
Whose listless hours unprofitably roll,
By one enthusiast feeling unredeem'd.

See GODWIN'S *Pol. Jus. vol.* i, *page* 411;—*and Condorcet, Esquisse d'un Tableau Historique des Progrès de l'Esprit Humain, Époque* ix.

Note 17, page 120, col. 2.

No longer now
He slays the lamb that looks him in the face.

I hold that the depravity of the physical and moral nature of man originated in his unnatural habits of life. The origin of man, like that of the universe of which he is a part, is enveloped in impenetrable mystery. His generations either had a beginning, or they had not. The weight of evidence in favour of each of these suppositions seems tolerably equal; and it is perfectly unimportant, to the present argument, which is assumed. The language spoken however by the mythology of nearly all religions seems to prove, that at some distant period man forsook the path of nature, and sacrificed the purity and happiness of his being to unnatural appetites. The date of this event seems to have also been that of some great change in the climates of the earth, with which it has an obvious correspondence. The allegory of Adam and Eve eating of the tree of evil, and entailing upon their posterity the wrath of God, and the loss of everlasting life, admits of no other explanation than the disease and crime that have flowed from unnatural diet. Milton was so well aware of this, that he makes Raphael thus exhibit to Adam the consequence of his disobedience.

—————————— Immediately a place
Before his eyes appear'd: sad, noisome, dark:
A lazar-house it seem'd; wherein were laid
Numbers of all diseased; all maladies
Of ghastly spasm, or racking torture, qualms
Of heart-sick agony, all feverous kinds,
Convulsions, epilepsies, fierce catarrhs,
Intestine stone and ulcer, cholic pangs,
Dæmoniac frenzy, moping melancholy,
And moon-struck madness, pining atrophy,
Marasmus, and wide-wasting pestilence,
Dropsies, and asthmas, and joint-racking rheums.

And how many thousands more might not be added to this frightful catalogue!

The story of Prometheus is one likewise which, although universally admitted to be allegorical, has never been satisfactorily explained. Prometheus stole fire from heaven, and was chained for this crime to Mount Caucasus, where a vulture continually devoured his liver, that grew to meet its hunger. Hesiod says, that, before the time of Prometheus, mankind were exempt from suffering; that they enjoyed a vigorous youth, and that death, when at length it came, approached like sleep, and gently closed their eyes. Again, so general was this opinion, that Horace, a poet of the Augustan age, writes—

Audax omnia perpeti,
Gens humana ruit per vetitum nefas;

Audax Iapeti genus
Ignem fraude mala gentibus intulit:
Post ignem ætheriâ domo
Subductum, macies et nova febrium
Terris incubuit cohors,
Semotique prius tarda necessitas
Lethi corripuit gradum.

How plain a language is spoken by all this? Prometheus (who represents the human race) effected some great change in the condition of his nature, and applied fire to culinary purposes; thus inventing an expedient for screening from his disgust the horrors of the shambles. From this moment his vitals were devoured by the vulture of disease. It consumed his being in every shape of its loathsome and infinite variety, inducing the soul-quelling sinkings of premature and violent death. All vice arose from the ruin of healthful innocence. Tyranny, superstition, commerce, and inequality, were then first known, when reason vainly attempted to guide the wanderings of exacerbated passion. I conclude this part of the subject with an extract from Mr Newton's Defence of Vegetable Regimen, from whom I have borrowed this interpretation of the fable of Prometheus.

« Making allowance for such transposition of the events of the allegory as time might produce after the important truths were forgotten, which this portion of the ancient mythology was intended to transmit, the drift of the fable seems to be this:—Man at his creation was endowed with the gift of perpetual youth; that is, he was not formed to be a sickly suffering creature as we now see him, but to enjoy health, and to sink by slow degrees into the bosom of his parent earth, without disease or pain. Prometheus first taught the use of animal food (primus bovem occidit Prometheus[1]) and of fire, with which to render it more digestible and pleasing to the taste. Jupiter, and the rest of the gods, foreseeing the consequences of these inventions, were amused or irritated at the short-sighted devices of the newly-formed creature, and left him to experience the sad effects of them. Thirst, the necessary concomitant of a flesh diet,» (perhaps of all diet vitiated by culinary preparation,) « ensued; water was resorted to, and man forfeited the inestimable gift of health which he had received from heaven: he became diseased, the partaker of a precarious existence, and no longer descended slowly to his grave. » [2]

But just disease to luxury succeeds,
And every death its own avenger breeds;
The fury passions from that blood began,
And turn'd on man a fiercer savage—man.

Man, and the animals whom he has infected with his society, or depraved by his dominion, are alone diseased. The wild hog, the mouflon, the bison, and the wolf, are perfectly exempt from malady, and invariably die either from external violence, or natural old age. But the domestic hog, the sheep, the cow, and the dog, are subject to an incredible variety of distempers; and, like the corrupters of their nature, have physicians who thrive upon their miseries. The supereminence of man is like Satan's, a supereminence of pain; and the majority of his species, doomed to penury, disease, and crime, have reason to curse the untoward event, that by enabling him to communicate his sensations, raised him above the level of his fellow animals. But the steps that have been taken are irrevocable. The whole of human science is comprised in one question:—How can the advantages of intellect and civilization be reconciled with the liberty and pure pleasures of natural life? How can we take the benefits, and reject the evils of the system, which is now interwoven with all the fibres of our being?—I believe that abstinence from animal food and spirituous liquors would in a great measure capacitate us for the solution of this important question.

It is true, that mental and bodily derangement is attributable in part to other deviations from rectitude and nature than those which concern diet. The mistakes cherished by society respecting the connection of the sexes, whence the misery and diseases of unsatisfied celibacy, unenjoying prostitution, and the premature arrival of puberty necessarily spring; the putrid atmosphere of crowded cities; the exhalations of chemical processes; the muffling of our bodies in superfluous apparel; the absurd treatment of infants:—all these, and innumerable other causes, contribute their mite to the mass of human evil.

Comparative anatomy teaches us that man resembles frugivorous animals in every thing, and carnivorous in nothing; he has neither claws wherewith to seize his prey, nor distinct and pointed teeth to tear the living fibre. A Mandarin of the first class, with nails two inches long, would probably find them alone inefficient to hold even a hare. After every subterfuge of gluttony, the bull must be degraded into the ox, and the ram into the wether, by an unnatural and inhuman operation, that the flaccid fibre may offer a fainter resistance to rebellious nature. It is only by softening and disguising dead flesh by culinary preparation, that it is rendered susceptible of mastication or digestion; and that the sight of its bloody juices and raw horror does not excite intolerable loathing and disgust. Let the advocate of animal food force himself to a decisive experiment on its fitness, and, as Plutarch recommends, tear a living lamb with his teeth, and plunging his head into its vitals, slake his thirst with the steaming blood; when fresh from the deed of horror, let him revert to the irresistible instincts of nature that would rise in judgment against it, and say, Nature formed me for such work as this. Then, and then only, would he be consistent.

Man resembles no carnivorous animal. There is no exception, unless man be one, to the rule of herbivorous animals having cellulated colons.

The orang-outang perfectly resembles man both in the order and number of his teeth. The orang-outang is the most anthropomorphous of the ape tribe, all of which are strictly frugivorous. There is no other species of animals, which live on different food, in which this analogy exists.[1] In many frugivorous animals, the canine teeth are more pointed and distinct than those of man. The resemblance also of the human stomach to that of the orang-outang, is greater than to that of any other animal.

The intestines are also identical with those of herbivorous animals, which present a larger surface for absorption, and have ample and cellulated colons. The cœcum also, though short, is larger than that of carnivo-

[1] Plin. Nat. Hist., lib. vii, sect. 57.
[2] Return to Nature. Cadell, 1811.

[1] Cuvier, Leçons d'Anat. Comp. tom. iii, page 169, 373, 448, 465, 480. Rees's Cyclopædia, article Man.

rous animals; and even here the orang-outang retains its accustomed similarity.

The structure of the human frame then is that of one fitted to a pure vegetable diet, in every essential particular. It is true, that the reluctance to abstain from animal food, in those who have been long accustomed to its stimulus, is so great in some persons of weak minds, as to be scarcely overcome; but this is far from bringing any argument in its favour. A lamb, which was fed for some time on flesh by a ship's crew, refused its natural diet at the end of the voyage. There are numerous instances of horses, sheep, oxen, and even wood-pigeons, having been taught to live upon flesh, until they have loathed their natural aliment. Young children evidently prefer pastry, oranges, apples, and other fruit, to the flesh of animals; until, by the gradual depravation of the digestive organs, the free use of vegetables has for a time produced serious inconveniences; *for a time*, I say, since there never was an instance wherein a change from spirituous liquors and animal food to vegetables and pure water, has failed ultimately to invigorate the body, by rendering its juices bland and consentaneous, and to restore to the mind that cheerfulness and elasticity, which not one in fifty possesses on the present system. A love of strong liquors is also with difficulty taught to infants. Almost every one remembers the wry faces which the first glass of port produced. Unsophisticated instinct is invariably unerring; but to decide on the fitness of animal food, from the perverted appetites which its constrained adoption produces, is to make the criminal a judge in his own cause: it is even worse, it is appealing to the infatuated drunkard in a question of the salubrity of brandy.

What is the cause of morbid action in the animal system? Not the air we breathe, for our fellow denizens of nature breathe the same uninjured; not the water we drink, (if remote from the pollutions of man and his inventions,[1]) for the animals drink it too; not the earth we tread upon; not the unobscured sight of glorious nature, in the wood, the field, or the expanse of sky and ocean; nothing that we are or do in common with the undiseased inhabitants of the forest. Something then wherein we differ from them: our habit of altering our food by fire, so that our appetite is no longer a just criterion for the fitness of its gratification. Except in children, there remain no traces of that instinct which determines, in all other animals, what aliment is natural or otherwise; and so perfectly obliterated are they in the reasoning adults of our species, that it has become necessary to urge considerations drawn from comparative anatomy to prove that we are naturally frugivorous.

Crime is madness. Madness is disease. Whenever the cause of disease shall be discovered, the root, from which all vice and misery have so long overshadowed the globe, will lie bare to the axe. All the exertions of man, from that moment, may be considered as tending to the clear profit of his species. No sane mind in a sane body resolves upon a real crime. It is a man of violent passions, blood-shot eyes, and swollen veins, that alone can grasp the knife of murder. The system of a simple diet promises no Utopian advantages. It is no mere reform of legislation, whilst the furious passions and evil propensities of the human heart, in which it had its origin, are still unassuaged. It strikes at the root of all evil, and is an experiment which may be tried with success, not alone by nations, but by small societies, families, and even individuals. In no case has a return to vegetable diet produced the slightest injury; in most it has been attended with changes undeniably beneficial. Should ever a physician be born with the genius of Locke, I am persuaded that he might trace all bodily and mental derangements to our unnatural habits, as clearly as that philosopher has traced all knowledge to sensation. What prolific sources of disease are not those mineral and vegetable poisons that have been introduced for its extirpation! How many thousands have become murderers and robbers, bigots and domestic tyrants, dissolute and abandoned adventurers, from the use of fermented liquors! who, had they slaked their thirst only with pure water, would have lived but to diffuse the happiness of their own unperverted feelings. How many groundless opinions and absurd institutions have not received a general sanction from the sottishness and intemperance of individuals! Who will assert that, had the populace of Paris satisfied their hunger at the ever-furnished table of vegetable nature, they would have lent their brutal suffrage to the proscription-list of Robespierre? Could a set of men, whose passions were not perverted by unnatural stimuli, look with coolness on an auto da fé? Is it to be believed that a being of gentle feelings, rising from his meal of roots, would take delight in sports of blood? Was Nero a man of temperate life? could you read calm health in his cheek, flushed with ungovernable propensities of hatred for the human race? Did Muley Ismael's pulse beat evenly, was his skin transparent, did his eyes beam with healthfulness, and its invariable concomitants, cheerfulness and benignity? Though history has decided none of these questions, a child could not hesitate to answer in the negative. Surely the bile-suffused cheek of Bonaparte, his wrinkled brow, and yellow eye, the ceaseless inquietude of his nervous system, speak no less plainly the character of his unresting ambition than his murders and his victories. It is impossible, had Bonaparte descended from a race of vegetable feeders, that he could have had either the inclination or the power to ascend the throne of the Bourbons. The desire of tyranny could scarcely be excited in the individual, the power to tyrannize would certainly not be delegated by a society neither frenzied by inebriation nor rendered impotent and irrational by disease. Pregnant indeed with inexhaustible calamity is the renunciation of instinct, as it concerns our physical nature; arithmetic cannot enumerate, nor reason perhaps suspect, the multitudinous sources of disease in civilized life. Even common water, that apparently innoxious pabulum, when corrupted by the filth of populous cities, is a deadly and insidious destroyer.[1] Who can wonder that all the inducements held out by God himself in the Bible to virtue should have been vainer than a nurse's tale; and that those dogmas, by which he has there ex-

[1] The necessity of resorting to some means of purifying water, and the disease which arises from its adulteration in civilized countries, is sufficiently apparent.—See Dr Lambe's Reports on Cancer. I do not assert that the use of water is in itself unnatural, but that the unperverted palate would swallow no liquid capable of occasioning disease.

[1] Lambe's Reports on Cancer.

cited and justified the most ferocious propensities, should have alone been deemed essential; whilst Christians are in the daily practice of all those habits, which have infected with disease and crime, not only the reprobate sons, but these favoured children of the common Father's love? Omnipotence itself could not save them from the consequences of this original and universal sin.

There is no disease, bodily or mental, which adoption of vegetable diet and pure water has not infallibly mitigated, wherever the experiment has been fairly tried. Debility is gradually converted into strength, disease into healthfulness; madness, in all its hideous variety, from the ravings of the fettered maniac, to the unaccountable irrationalities of ill temper, that make a hell of domestic life, into a calm and considerate evenness of temper, that alone might offer a certain pledge of the future moral reformation of society. On a natural system of diet, old age would be our last and our only malady; the term of our existence would be protracted; we should enjoy life, and no longer preclude others from the enjoyment of it; all sensational delights would be infinitely more exquisite and perfect; the very sense of being would then be a continued pleasure, such as we now feel it in some few and favoured moments of our youth. By all that is sacred in our hopes for the human race, I conjure those who love happiness and truth, to give a fair trial to the vegetable system. Reasoning is surely superfluous on a subject whose merits an experience of six months would set for ever at rest. But it is only among the enlightened and benevolent that so great a sacrifice of appetite and prejudice can be expected, even though its ultimate excellence should not admit of dispute. It is found easier, by the short-sighted victims of disease, to palliate their torments by medicine, than to prevent them by regimen. The vulgar of all ranks are invariably sensual and indocile; yet I cannot but feel myself persuaded, that when the benefits of vegetable diet are mathematically proved; when it is as clear, that those who live naturally are exempt from premature death, as that nine is not one, the most sottish of mankind will feel a preference towards a long and tranquil, contrasted with a short and painful life. On an average, out of sixty persons, four die in three years. Hopes are entertained that, in April 1814, a statement will be given, that sixty persons, all having lived more than three years on vegetables and pure water, are then *in perfect health.* More than two years have now elapsed; *not one of them has died;* no such example will be found in any sixty persons taken at random. Seventeen persons of all ages (the families of Dr Lamb and Mr Newton) have lived for seven years on this diet without a death, and almost without the slightest illness. Surely, when we consider that some of these were infants, and one a martyr to asthma now nearly subdued, we may challenge any seventeen persons taken at random in this city to exhibit a parallel case. Those who have been excited to question the rectitude of established habits of diet, by these loose remarks, should consult Mr Newton's luminous and eloquent essay. [1]

When these proofs come fairly before the world, and are clearly seen by all who understand arithmetic, it is scarcely possible that abstinence from aliments demonstrably pernicious should not become universal. In proportion to the number of proselytes, so will be the weight of evidence; and when a thousand persons can be produced, living on vegetables and distilled water, who have to dread no disease but old age, the world will be compelled to regard animal flesh and fermented liquors as slow but certain poisons. The change which would be produced by simpler habits on political economy is sufficiently remarkable. The monopolizing eater of animal flesh would no longer destroy his constitution by devouring an acre at a meal, and many loaves of bread would cease to contribute to gout, madness and apoplexy, in the shape of a pint of porter, or a dram of gin, when appeasing the long-protracted famine of the hard-working peasant's hungry babes. The quantity of nutritious vegetable matter, consumed in fattening the carcase of an ox, would afford ten times the sustenance, undepraving indeed, and incapable of generating disease, if gathered immediately from the bosom of the earth. The most fertile districts of the habitable globe are now actually cultivated by men for animals, at a delay and waste of aliment absolutely incapable of calculation. It is only the wealthy that can, to any great degree, even now, indulge the unnatural craving for dead flesh, and they pay for the greater licence of the privilege by subjection to supernumerary diseases. Again, the spirit of the nation that should take the lead in this great reform, would insensibly become agricultural; commerce, with all its vice, selfishness and corruption, would gradually decline; more natural habits would produce gentler manners, and the excessive complication of political relations would be so far simplified, that every individual might feel and understand why he loved his country, and took a personal interest in its welfare. How would England, for example, depend on the caprices of foreign rulers, if she contained within herself all the necessaries, and despised whatever they possessed of the luxuries of life? How could they starve her into compliance with their views? Of what consequence would it be that they refused to take her woollen manufactures, when large and fertile tracts of the island ceased to be allotted to the waste of pasturage? On a natural system of diet, we should require no spices from India; no wines from Portugal, Spain, France, or Madeira; none of those multitudinous articles of luxury, for which every corner of the globe is rifled, and which are the causes of so much individual rivalship, such calamitous and sanguinary national disputes. In the history of modern times, the avarice of commercial monopoly, no less than the ambition of weak and wicked chiefs, seems to have fomented the universal discord, to have added stubbornness to the mistakes of cabinets, and indocility to the infatuation of the people. Let it ever be remembered, that it is the direct influence of commerce to make the interval between the richest and the poorest man wider and more unconquerable. Let it be remembered, that it is a foe to every thing of real worth and excellence in the human character. The odious and disgusting aristocracy of wealth is built upon the ruins of all that is good in chivalry or republicanism; and luxury is the forerunner of a barbarism scarce capable of cure. Is it impossible to realize a state of society, where all the energies of man shall be directed to the production of his solid happiness? Certainly, if

[1] «Return to Nature, or Defence of Vegetable Regimen.» Cadell, 1811.

this advantage (the object of all political speculation) be in any degree attainable, it is attainable only by a community, which holds out no factitious incentives to the avarice and ambition of the few, and which is internally organized for the liberty, security and comfort of the many. None must be entrusted with power (and money is the completest species of power) who do not stand pledged to use it exclusively for the general benefit. But the use of animal flesh and fermented liquors, directly militates with this equality of the rights of man. The peasant cannot gratify these fashionable cravings without leaving his family to starve. Without discase and war, those sweeping curtailers of population, pasturage would include a waste too great to be afforded. The labour requisite to support a family is far lighter [1] than is usually supposed. The peasantry work, not only for themselves, but for the aristocracy, the army, and the manufacturers.

The advantage of a reform in diet is obviously greater than that of any other. It strikes at the root of the evil. To remedy the abuses of legislation, before we annihilate the propensities by which they are produced, is to suppose, that by taking away the effect, the cause will cease to operate. But the efficacy of this system depends entirely on the proselytism of individuals, and grounds its merits, as a benefit to the community, upon the total change of the dietetic habits in its members. It proceeds securely from a number of particular cases to one that is universal, and has this advantage over the contrary mode, that one error does not invalidate all that has gone before.

Let not too much however be expected from this system. The healthiest among us is not exempt from hereditary disease. The most symmetrical, athletic, and long-lived, is a being inexpressibly inferior to what he would have been, had not the unnatural habits of his ancestors accumulated for him a certain portion of malady and deformity. In the most perfect specimen of civilized man, something is still found wanting by the physiological critic. Can a return to nature, then, instantaneously eradicate predispositions that have been slowly taking root in the silence of innumerable ages?—Indubitably not. All that I contend for is, that from the moment of the relinquishing all unnatural habits, no new disease is generated; and that the predisposition to hereditary maladies gradually perishes, for want of its accustomed supply. In cases of consumption, cancer, gout, asthma, and scrofula, such is the invariable tendency of a diet of vegetables and pure water.

Those who may be induced by these remarks to give the vegetable system a fair trial, should, in the first place, date the commencement of their practice from the moment of their conviction. All depends upon breaking through a pernicious habit resolutely and at once. Dr Trotter [2] asserts, that no drunkard was ever reformed by gradually relinquishing his dram. Animal flesh, in its effects on the human stomach, is analogous to a dram. It is similar to the kind, though differing in the degree, of its operation. The proselyte to a pure diet must be warned to expect a temporary diminution of muscular strength. The subtraction of a powerful stimulus will suffice to account for this event. But it is only temporary, and is succeeded by an equable capability for exertion, far surpassing his former various and fluctuating strength. Above all, he will acquire an easiness of breathing, by which such exertion is performed, with a remarkable exemption from that painful and difficult panting now felt by almost every one, after hastily climbing an ordinary mountain. He will be equally capable of bodily exertion, or mental application, after as before his simple meal. He will feel none of the narcotic effects of ordinary diet. Irritability, the direct consequence of exhausting stimuli, would yield to the power of natural and tranquil impulses. He will no longer pine under the lethargy of ennui, that unconquerable weariness of life, more to be dreaded than death itself. He will escape the epidemic madness, which broods over its own injurious notions of the Deity, and «realizes the hell that priests and beldams feign.» Every man forms as it were his god from his own character; to the divinity of one of simple habits no offering would be more acceptable than the happiness of his creatures. He would be incapable of hating or persecuting others for the love of God. He will find, moreover, a system of simple diet to be a system of perfect epicurism. He will no longer be incessantly occupied in blunting and destroying those organs from which he expects his gratification. The pleasures of taste to be derived from a dinner of potatoes, beans, peas, turnips, lettuces, with a dessert of apples, gooseberries, strawberries, currants, raspberries, and, in winter, oranges, apples and pears, is far greater than is supposed. Those who wait until they can eat this plain fare with the sauce of appetite will scarcely join with the hypocritical sensualist at a lord-mayor's feast, who declaims against the pleasures of the table. Solomon kept a thousand concubines, and owned in despair that all was vanity. The man whose happiness is constituted by the society of one amiable woman, would find some difficulty in sympathizing with the disappointment of this venerable debauchee.

I address myself not only to the young enthusiast, the ardent devotee of truth and virtue, the pure and passionate moralist, yet unvitiated by the contagion of the world. He will embrace a pure system, from its abstract truth, its beauty, its simplicity, and its promise of wide-extended benefit; unless custom has turned poison into food, he will hate the brutal pleasures of the chace by instinct; it will be a contemplation full of horror and disappointment to his mind, that beings capable of the gentlest and most admirable sympathies, should take delight in the death-pangs and last convulsions of dying animals. The elderly man, whose youth has been poisoned by intemperance, or who has lived with apparent moderation, and is afflicted with a variety of painful maladies, would find his account in a beneficial change produced without the risk of poisonous medicines. The mother, to whom the perpetual restlessness of disease, and unaccountable deaths incident to her children, are the causes of incurable unhappiness, would on this diet experience the satisfaction of beholding their perpetual

[1] It has come under the author's experience, that some of the workmen on an embankment in North Wales, who, in consequence of the inability of the proprietor to pay them, seldom received their wages, have supported large families by cultivating small spots of sterile ground by moonlight. In the notes to Pratt's Poem, «Bread of the Poor,» is an account of an industrious labourer, who, by working in a small garden, before and after his day's task, attained to an enviable state of independence.

[2] See Trotter on the Nervous Temperament.

health and natural playfulness.[1] The most valuable lives are daily destroyed by diseases, that it is dangerous to palliate and impossible to cure by medicine. How much longer will man continue to pimp for the gluttony of death, his most insidious, implacable, and eternal foe?

Ἀλλὰ δρακώντας ἀγριοὺς καλεῖτε καὶ παρδελέις καὶ λέοντας, αὐτοὶ δὲ μιαφονεῖτε εἰς ὠμότητα καταλιπόντες ἐκείνοις οὐδέν. ἐκείνοις μέν ὁ φόνος τροφή, ἡμῖν δὲ ὄψον ἐστίν.

* * * * *

Οτι γάρ οὐκ ἔστιν ἀνθρώπῳ κατὰ φύσιν τό σαρκοφαγεῖν, πρῶτον μὲν ἀπὸ των σωμάτων δηλοῦται τῆς κατασκεῦης. Οὐδεν γὰρ ἔοικε τὸ ἀνθρῶπου σῶμα των ἐπὶ σαρκοφαγίᾳ γεγονότων, οὐ, χρωπότης χείλους, οὐκ ὀξύτης ὄνυχος οὐ τραχύτης ὀδόντων πρόσεστιν, οὐ κοιλίας ευτονία, καὶ πνεύματος θερμότης, τρέψαι, καὶ κατεργάσασθαι δυνατὴ τό βαρύ καὶ κρεῶδες; ἀλλ' αὐτόθεν ἡ φύσις τῇ λειότητι των ὀδόντων, καὶ τῇ σμικρότητι τοῦ στόματος, καὶ τῇ μαλακότητι τῆς γλώσσης, καὶ τῇ πρὸς πέψιν ἀμβλύτητι του πνεύματος, ἐξόμνυται τὴν σαρκοφαγιάν. Ει δὲ λεγεῖς πεφυκέναι σεαυτὸν ἐπὶ τοιαύτην ἐδωδήν, ὅ βούλει φαγεῖν, πρῶτον αὐτός ἀπόκτεινον. ἀλλ' αὐτός, διὰ σεαυτοῦ μὴ χρησάμενος κοπίδι, μηδὲ τυμπανῳ μηδὲ πελέκει. ἀλλὰ ὡς λύκοι, καὶ ἄρκτοι, καὶ λεόνες αὐτόι ὡς ἐαθιούσι φονευούσιν, ἄνελε ὀδύγματι βοῦν, ἢ σώματε σῦν, ἢ ἄρνα ἢ λαγὼον διάῤῥηξον, καὶ φάγε προσπεσὼν ἔπι ξῶντος ὡς ἐκεῖνα.

* * * * *

Ημεῖς δὲ οὕτως εν τῷ μιαιφόνῳ τρυφῶμεν, ὥστε ὄψον τὸ κρέας προσαγορεύομεν, εἶτα ὄψων πρὸς αὐτό τὸ κρέας δεόμεθα, ἀναμιγνύντες ἔλαιον, οἶνον, μέλι, γάρον, ὄξος, ἡ ὀυσμασι Συριακοῖς, Ἀῤῥαβικοῖς, ὥσπερ ὄντος νεκρόν, ἐνταρίξοντες. Καὶ γάρ ὅτως αὐτων διαλυθέντων καὶ μαλαχθέντων καὶ τρόπον τινά κρευσαπέυντων ἔργον ἐστὶ τὴν πέψιν κρατῆσαι καὶ διακρατηθεισης δέ δεινάς βαοῦντας ἐμποιεῖ καὶ νοσῶδεις απεψιάς.

Οὕτω τὸ πρῶτον ἀγριόν τι ξῶον ἐῤῥώθη καὶ κακοῦργον εἶτα ὄρνις τις ἢ ἰχθὺς εἵλκυστο· καὶ γεύομενον, οὗτο καὶ προμελετῆσαν εν ἐκείνοις τὸ νικοῦν ἐπι βοῦν ἐργάτην ἦλθε, καὶ τὸ κοσμον πρόθετον καὶ τὸν οἰκουρον ἀλεκτρύονα· καὶ καταμικρὸν οὗτο τὴν ἀπλητιάν πονώσαντες, ἐπισπαγὰς ανθρωπῶν, καὶ φόνους καὶ πολέμους προῆλθεν.

Πλουτ. περι της σαρκοφαγιας.

[1] See Mr Newton's book. His children are the most beautiful and healthy creatures it is possible to conceive; the girls are perfect models for a sculptor; their dispositions are also the most gentle and conciliating; the judicious treatment, which they experience in other points, may be a correlative cause of this. In the first five years of their life, of 18,000 children that are born, 7,500 die of various diseases; and how many more of those that survive are not rendered miserable by maladies not immediately mortal? The quality and quantity of a woman's milk are materially injured by the use of dead flesh. In an island near Iceland, where no vegetables are to be got, the children invariably die of tetanus, before they are three weeks old, and the population is supplied from the main land.—Sir G. Mackenzie's *Hist. of Iceland.* See also *Emile*, chap. i, pages 53, 54, 56.

Alastor; or, the Spirit of Solitude.

Nondum amabam, et amare amabam, quærebam quid amarem amans amare.

Confess. St August.

PREFACE.

The poem entitled «Alastor,» may be considered as allegorical of one of the most interesting situations of the human mind. It represents a youth of uncorrupted feelings and adventurous genius led forth by an imagination inflamed and purified through familiarity with all that is excellent and majestic, to the contemplation of the universe. He drinks deep of the fountains of knowledge, and is still insatiate. The magnificence and beauty of the external world sinks profoundly into the frame of his conceptions, and affords to their modifications a variety not to be exhausted. So long as it is possible for his desires to point towards objects thus infinite and unmeasured, he is joyous, and tranquil, and self-possessed. But the period arrives when these objects cease to suffice. His mind is at length suddenly awakened, and thirsts for intercourse with an intelligence similar to itself. He images to himself the being whom he loves conversant with speculations of the sublimest and most perfect natures, the vision in which he embodies his own imaginations unites all of wonderful, or wise, or beautiful, which the poet, the philosopher, or the lover could depicture. The intellectual faculties, the imagination, the functions of sense, have their respective requisitions on the sympathy of corresponding powers in other human beings. The Poet is represented as uniting these requisitions, and attaching them to a single image. He seeks in vain for a prototype of his conception. Blasted by his disappointment, he descends to an untimely grave. The picture is not barren of instruction to actual men. The Poet's self-centred seclusion was avenged by the furies of an irresistible passion pursuing him to speedy ruin. But that power which strikes the luminaries of the world with sudden darkness and extinction, by awakening them to too exquisite a perception of its influences, dooms to a slow and poisonous decay those meaner spirits that dare to abjure its dominion. Their destiny is more abject and inglorious as their delinquency is more contemptible and pernicious. They who, deluded by no generous error, instigated by no sacred thirst of doubtful knowledge, duped by no illustrious superstition, loving nothing on this earth, and cherishing no hopes beyond, yet keep aloof from sympathies with their kind, rejoicing

neither in human joy nor mourning with human grief; these, and such as they, have their apportioned curse. They languish, because none feel with them their common nature. They are morally dead. They are neither friends, nor lovers, nor fathers, nor citizens of the world, nor benefactors of their country. Among those who attempt to exist without human sympathy, the pure and tender-hearted perish through the intensity and passion of their search after its communities, when the vacancy of their spirit suddenly makes itself felt. All else, selfish, blind, and torpid, are those unforeseeing multitudes who constitute, together with their own, the lasting misery and loneliness of the world. Those who love not their fellow-beings, live unfruitful lives, and prepare for their old age a miserable grave.

The good die first,
And those whose hearts are dry as summer's dust,
Burn to the socket!

December 14, 1815.

ALASTOR;

OR, THE SPIRIT OF SOLITUDE.

Earth, ocean, air, beloved brotherhood!
If our great Mother has imbued my soul
With aught of natural piety to feel
Your love, and recompense the boon with mine;
If dewy morn, and odorous noon, and even,
With sunset and its gorgeous ministers,
And solemn midnight's tingling silentness;
If autumn's hollow sighs in the sere wood,
And winter robing with pure snow and crowns
Of starry ice the grey grass and bare boughs;
If spring's voluptuous pantings when she breathes
Her first sweet kisses, have been dear to me;
If no bright bird, insect, or gentle beast
I consciously have injured, but still loved
And cherish'd these my kindred;—then forgive
This boast, beloved brethren, and withdraw
No portion of your wonted favour now!

Mother of this unfathomable world!
Favour my solemn song, for I have loved
Thee ever, and thee only; I have watch'd
Thy shadow, and the darkness of thy steps,
And my heart ever gazes on the depth
Of thy deep mysteries. I have made my bed
In charnels and on coffins, where black death
Keeps record of the trophies won from thee,
Hoping to still these obstinate questionings
Of thee and thine, by forcing some lone ghost,
Thy messenger, to render up the tale
Of what we are. In lone and silent hours,
When night makes a wierd sound of its own stillness,
Like an inspired and desperate alchymist
Staking his very life on some dark hope,
Have I mix'd awful talk and asking looks
With my most innocent love, until strange tears,
Uniting with those breathless kisses, made
Such magic as compels the charmed night
To render up thy charge: and, though ne'er yet
Thou hast unveil'd thy inmost sanctuary,
Enough from incommunicable dream,
And twilight phantasms and deep noonday thought
Has shone within me, that serenely now,
And moveless as a long-forgotten lyre,
Suspended in the solitary dome
Of some mysterious and deserted fane,
I wait thy breath, Great Parent, that my strain
May modulate with murmurs of the air,
And motions of the forests and the sea,
And voice of living beings, and woven hymns
Of night and day, and the deep heart of man.

There was a Poet whose untimely tomb
No human hands with pious reverence rear'd,
But the charm'd eddies of autumnal winds
Built o'er his mouldering bones a pyramid
Of mouldering leaves in the waste wilderness;
A lovely youth!—no mourning maiden deck'd
With weeping flowers, or votive cypress wreath,
The lone couch of his everlasting sleep:
Gentle, and brave, and generous, no lorn bard
Breathed o'er his dark fate one melodious sigh:
He lived, he died, he sung, in solitude.
Strangers have wept to hear his passionate notes,
And virgins, as unknown he past, have sigh'd
And wasted for fond love of his wild eyes.
The fire of those soft orbs has ceased to burn,
And Silence, too enamour'd of that voice,
Locks its mute music in her rugged cell.

By solemn vision and bright silver dream,
His infancy was nurtured. Every sight
And sound from the vast earth and ambient air,
Sent to his heart its choicest impulses.
The fountains of divine philosophy
Fled not his thirsting lips; and all of great,
Or good, or lovely, which the sacred past
In truth or fable consecrates, he felt
And knew. When early youth had past, he left
His cold fireside and alienated home,
To seek strange truths in undiscover'd lands.
Many a wide waste and tangled wilderness
Has lured his fearless steps; and has he bought
With his sweet voice and eyes, from savage men,
His rest and food. Nature's most secret steps
He, like her shadow, has pursued, where'er
The red volcano overcanopies
Its fields of snow and pinnacles of ice
With burning smoke; or where bitumen lakes,
On black bare pointed islets ever beat
With sluggish surge; or where the secret caves,
Rugged and dark, winding among the springs
Of fire and poison, inaccessible
To avarice or pride, their starry domes
Of diamond and of gold expand above
Numberless and immeasurable halls,
Frequent with crystal column, and clear shrines
Of pearl, and thrones radiant with chrysolite.
Nor had that scene of ampler majesty
Than gems or gold, the varying roof of heaven
And the green earth, lost in his heart its claims
To love and wonder; he would linger long
In lonesome vales, making the wild his home,
Until the doves and squirrels would partake
From his innocuous hand his bloodless food,
Lured by the gentle meaning of his looks,

And the wild antelope, that starts whene'er
The dry leaf rustles in the brake, suspend
Her timid steps, to gaze upon a form
More graceful than her own.

His wandering step,
Obedient to high thoughts, has visited
The awful ruins of the days of old:
Athens, and Tyre, and Balbec, and the waste
Where stood Jerusalem, the fallen towers
Of Babylon, the eternal pyramids,
Memphis and Thebes, and whatsoe'er of strange,
Sculptured on alabaster obelisk,
Or jasper tomb, or mutilated sphinx,
Dark Ethiopia on her desert hills
Conceals. Among the ruin'd temples there,
Stupendous columns, and wild images
Of more than man, where marble demons watch
The Zodiac's brazen mystery, and dead men
Hang their mute thoughts on the mute walls around,
He linger'd, poring on memorials
Of the world's youth, through the long burning day
Gazed on those speechless shapes, nor, when the moon
Fill'd the mysterious halls with floating shades
Suspended he that task, but ever gazed
And gazed, till meaning on his vacant mind
Flash'd like strong inspiration, and he saw
The thrilling secrets of the birth of time.

Meantime an Arab maiden brought his food,
Her daily portion, from her father's tent,
And spread her matting for his couch, and stole
From duties and repose to tend his steps:—
Enamour'd, yet not daring for deep awe
To speak her love:—and watch'd his nightly sleep,
Sleepless herself, to gaze upon his lips
Parted in slumber, whence the regular breath
Of innocent dreams arose: then, when red morn
Made paler the pale moon, to her cold home,
Wilder'd and wan and panting, she return'd.

The Poet wandering on, through Arabie
And Persia, and the wild Carmanian waste,
And o'er the aërial mountains which pour down
Indus and Oxus from their icy caves,
In joy and exultation held his way
Till in the vale of Cashmire, far within
Its loneliest dell, where odorous plants entwine
Beneath the hollow rocks a natural bower,
Beside a sparkling rivulet he stretch'd
His languid limbs. A vision on his sleep
There came, a dream of hopes that never yet
Had flush'd his cheek. He dreamed a veil'd maid
Sate near him, talking in low solemn tones.
Her voice was like the voice of his own soul
Heard in the calm of thought; its music long,
Like woven sounds of streams and breezes, held
His inmost sense suspended in its web
Of many-colour'd woof and shifting hues.
Knowledge and truth and virtue were her theme,
And lofty hopes of divine liberty,
Thoughts the most dear to him, and poesy,
Herself a poet. Soon the solemn mood
Of her pure mind kindled through all her frame
A permeating fire: wild numbers then
She raised, with voice stifled in tremulous sobs
Subdued by its own pathos: her fair hands
Were bare alone, sweeping from some strange harp
Strange symphony, and in their branching veins
The eloquent blood told an ineffable tale.
The beating of her heart was heard to fill
The pauses of her music, and her breath
Tumultuously accorded with those fits
Of intermitted song. Sudden she rose,
As if her heart impatiently endured
Its bursting burthen: at the sound he turn'd,
And saw by the warm light of their own life
Her glowing limbs beneath the sinuous veil
Of woven wind; her outspread arms now bare,
Her dark locks floating in the breath of night,
Her beamy bending eyes, her parted lips
Outstretch'd, and pale, and quivering eagerly.
His strong heart sunk and sicken'd with excess
Of love. He rear'd his shuddering limbs, and quell'd
His gasping breath, and spread his arms to meet
Her panting bosom:—she drew back awhile,
Then, yielding to the irresistible joy,
With frantic gesture and short breathless cry
Folded his frame in her dissolving arms.
Now blackness veil'd his dizzy eyes, and night
Involved and swallow'd up the vision; sleep,
Like a dark flood suspended in its course,
Roll'd back its impulse on his vacant brain.

Roused by the shock, he started from his trance—
The cold white light of morning, the blue moon
Low in the west, the clear and garish hills,
The distinct valley and the vacant woods,
Spread round where he stood.—Whither have fled
The hues of heaven that canopied his bower
Of yesternight? The sounds that soothed his sleep,
The mystery and the majesty of earth,
The joy, the exultation? His wan eyes
Gaze on the empty scene as vacantly
As ocean's moon looks on the moon in heaven.
The spirit of sweet human love has sent
A vision to the sleep of him who spurn'd
Her choicest gifts. He eagerly pursues
Beyond the realms of dream that fleeting shade;
He overleaps the bound. Alas! alas!
Were limbs and breath and being intertwined
Thus treacherously? Lost, lost, for ever lost,
In the wide pathless desert of dim sleep,
That beautiful shape! does the dark gate of death
Conduct to thy mysterious paradise,
O Sleep? Does the bright arch of rainbow clouds,
And pendent mountains seen in the calm lake,
Lead only to a black and watery depth,
While death's blue vault with loathliest vapours hung,
Where every shade which the foul grave exhales
Hides its dead eye from the detested day,
Conduct, O Sleep, to thy delightful realms?
This doubt with sudden tide flow'd on his heart,
The insatiate hope which it awaken'd, stung
His brain even like despair.

While daylight held
The sky, the Poet kept mute conference
With his still soul. At night the passion came,
Like the fierce fiend of a distemper'd dream,
And shook him from his rest, and led him forth
Into the darkness.—As an eagle grasp'd

In folds of the green serpent, feels her breast
Burn with the poison, and precipitates
Through night and day, tempest, and calm and cloud,
Frantic with dizzying anguish, her blind flight
O'er the wide aëry wilderness: thus driven
By the bright shadow of that lovely dream,
Beneath the cold glare of the desolate night,
Through tangled swamps and deep precipitous dells,
Startling with careless step the moon-light snake,
He fled.—Red morning dawn'd upon his flight.
Shedding the mockery of its vital hues
Upon his cheek of death. He wandered on,
Till vast Aornos seen from Petra's steep
Hung o'er the low horizon like a cloud;
Through Balk, and where the desolated tombs
Of Parthian kings scatter to every wind
Their wasting dust, wildly he wander'd on,
Day after day, a weary waste of hours,
Bearing within his life the brooding care
That ever fed on its decaying flame.
And now his limbs were lean; his scatter'd hair,
Sered by the autumn of strange suffering,
Sung dirges in the wind; his listless hand
Hung like dead bone within its wither'd skin;
Life, and the lustre that consumed it, shone
As in a furnace burning secretly
From his dark eyes alone. The cottagers,
Who moisten'd with human charity
His human wants, beheld with wondering awe
Their fleeting visitant. The mountaineer,
Encountering on some dizzy precipice
That spectral form, deem'd that the Spirit of wind,
With lightning eyes, and eager breath, and feet
Disturbing not the drifted snow, had paused
In his career. The infant would conceal
His troubled visage in his mother's robe,
In terror at the glare of those wild eyes,
To remember their strange light in many a dream
Of after-times: but youthful maidens taught
By nature, would interpret half the woe
That wasted him, would call him with false names
Brother, and friend, would press his pallid hand
At parting, and watch, dim through tears, the path
Of his departure from their father's door.

At length upon the lone Chorasmian shore
He paused, a wide and melancholy waste
Of putrid marshes—a strong impulse urged
His steps to the sea-shore. A swan was there
Beside a sluggish stream among the reeds.
It rose as he approach'd, and with strong wings
Scaling the upward sky, bent its bright course
High over the immeasurable main.
His eyes pursued its flight:—"Thou hast a home,
Beautiful bird! thou voyagest to thine home,
Where thy sweet mate will twine her downy neck
With thine, and welcome thy return with eyes
Bright in the lustre of their own fond joy.
And what am I that I should linger here,
With voice far sweeter than thy dying notes,
Spirit more vast than thine, frame more attuned
To beauty, wasting these surpassing powers
In the deaf air, to the blind earth, and heaven,
That echoes not my thoughts?" A gloomy smile
Of desperate hope wrinkled his quivering lips.
For sleep, he knew, kept most relentlessly
Its precious charge, and silent death exposed,
Faithless perhaps as sleep, a shadowy lure,
With doubtful smile mocking its own strange charms.

Startled by his own thoughts he look'd around.
There was no fair fiend near him, not a sight
Or sound of awe but in his own deep mind.
A little shallop floating near the shore
Caught the impatient wandering of his gaze.
It had been long abandon'd, for its sides
Gaped wide with many a rift, and its frail joints
Sway'd with the undulations of the tide.
A restless impulse urged him to embark,
And meet lone Death on the drear ocean's waste;
For well he knew that mighty Shadow loves
The slimy caverns of the populous deep.

The day was fair and sunny: sea and sky
Drank its inspiring radiance, and the wind
Swept strongly from the shore, blackening the waves.
Following his eager soul, the wanderer
Leap'd in the boat, he spread his cloak aloft
On the bare mast, and took his lonely seat,
And felt the boat speed o'er the tranquil sea
Like a torn cloud before the hurricane.

As one that in a silver vision floats
Obedient to the sweep of odorous winds
Upon resplendent clouds, so rapidly
Along the dark and ruffled waters fled
The straining boat.—A whirlwind swept it on,
With fierce gusts and precipitating force,
Through the white ridges of the chafed sea.
The waves arose. Higher and higher still
Their fierce necks writhed beneath the tempest's scourge,
Like serpents struggling in a vulture's grasp.
Calm and rejoicing in the fearful war
Of wave running on wave, and blast on blast
Descending, and black flood on whirlpool driven
With dark obliterating course, he sate:
As if their genii were the ministers
Appointed to conduct him to the light
Of those beloved eyes, the Poet sate
Holding the steady helm. Evening came on,
The beams of sunset hung their rainbow hues
High 'mid the shifting domes of sheeted spray
That canopied his path o'er the waste deep;
Twilight, ascending slowly from the east,
Entwined in duskier wreaths her braided locks
O'er the fair front and radiant eyes of day;
Night follow'd, clad with stars. On every side
More horribly the multitudinous streams
Of ocean's mountainous waste to mutual war
Rush'd in dark tumult thundering, as to mock
The calm and spangled sky. The little boat
Still fled before the storm; still fled, like foam
Down the steep cataract of a wintry river;
Now pausing on the edge of the riven wave;
Now leaving far behind the bursting mass
That fell, convulsing ocean. Safely fled—
As if that frail and wasted human form
Had been an elemental god.

At midnight
The moon arose: and lo! the ethereal cliffs
Of Caucasus, whose icy summits shone

Among the stars like sunlight, and around
Whose cavern'd base the whirlpools and the waves
Bursting and eddying irresistibly
Rage and resound for ever.—Who shall save?
The boat fled on,—the boiling torrent drove,—
The crags closed round with black and jagged arms,
The shatter'd mountain overhung the sea,
And faster still, beyond all human speed,
Suspended on the sweep of the smooth wave,
The little boat was driven. A cavern there
Yawn'd, and amid its slant and winding depths
Ingulf'd the rushing sea. The boat fled on
With unrelaxing speed. «Vision and Love!»
The Poet cried aloud, «I have beheld
The path of thy departure. Sleep and death
Shall not divide us long.»

The boat pursued
The windings of the cavern.—Day-light shone
At length upon that gloomy river's flow;
Now, where the fiercest war among the waves
Is calm, on the unfathomable stream
The boat moved slowly. Where the mountain riven
Exposed those black depths to the azure sky,
Ere yet the flood's enormous volume fell
Even to the base of Caucasus, with sound
That shook the everlasting rocks, the mass
Fill'd with one whirlpool all that ample chasm;
Stair above stair the eddying waters rose,
Circling immeasurably fast, and laved
With alternating dash the gnarl'd roots
Of mighty trees, that stretch'd their giant arms
In darkness over it. I' the midst was left,
Reflecting, yet distorting every cloud,
A pool of treacherous and tremendous calm.
Seized by the sway of the ascending stream,
With dizzy swiftness, round, and round, and round,
Ridge after ridge the straining boat arose,
Till on the verge of the extremest curve,
Where through an opening of the rocky bank
The waters overflow, and a smooth spot
Of glassy quiet mid those battling tides
Is left, the boat paused shuddering. Shall it sink
Down the abyss? Shall the reverting stress
Of that resistless gulf embosom it?
Now shall it fall? A wandering stream of wind,
Breathed from the west, has caught the expanded sail,
And, lo! with gentle motion between banks
Of mossy slope, and on a placid stream,
Beneath a woven grove, it sails, and, hark!
The ghastly torrent mingles its far roar
With the breeze murmuring in the musical woods.
Where the embowering trees recede, and leave
A little space of green expanse, the cove
Is closed by meeting banks, whose yellow flowers
Forever gaze on their own drooping eyes,
Reflected in the crystal calm. The wave
Of the boat's motion marr'd their pensive task,
Which nought but vagrant bird, or wanton wind,
Or falling spear-grass, or their own decay
Had e'er disturb'd before. The Poet long'd
To deck with their bright hues his wither'd hair,
But on his heart its solitude return'd,
And he forebore. Not the strong impulse hid
In those flush'd cheeks, bent eyes, and shadowy frame,
Had yet perform'd its ministry: it hung
Upon his life, as lightning in a cloud
Gleams, hovering ere it vanish, ere the floods
Of night close over it.

The noonday sun
Now shone upon the forest, one vast mass
Of mingling shade, whose brown magnificence
A narrow vale embosoms. There, huge caves,
Scoop'd in the dark base of those aery rocks,
Mocking its moans, respond and roar for ever.
The meeting boughs and implicated leaves
Wove twilight o'er the Poet's path, as led
By love, or dream, or god, or mightier Death,
He sought in Nature's dearest haunt, some bank,
Her cradle, and his sepulchre. More dark
And dark the shades accumulate—the oak,
Expanding its immeasurable arms,
Embraces the light beech. The pyramids
Of the tall cedar overarching, frame
Most solemn domes within, and far below,
Like clouds suspended in an emerald sky,
The ash and the acacia floating hang
Tremulous and pale. Like restless serpents, clothed
In rainbow and in fire, the parasites,
Starr'd with ten thousand blossoms, flow around
The grey trunks, and as gamesome infants' eyes,
With gentle meanings, and most innocent wiles,
Fold their beams round the hearts of those that love,
These twine their tendrils with the wedded boughs,
Uniting their close union; the woven leaves
Make net-work of the dark blue light of day,
And the night's noontide clearness, mutable
As shapes in the wierd clouds. Soft mossy lawns
Beneath these canopies extend their swells,
Fragrant with perfumed herbs, and eyed with blooms
Minute yet beautiful. One darkest glen
Sends from its woods of musk-rose, twined with jasmine,
A soul-dissolving odour, to invite
To some more lovely mystery. Through the dell,
Silence and Twilight here, twin-sisters, keep
Their noonday watch, and sail among the shades
Like vaporous shapes half seen; beyond, a well,
Dark, gleaming, and of most translucent wave,
Images all the woven boughs above,
And each depending leaf, and every speck
Of azure sky, darting between their chasms;
Nor aught else in the liquid mirror laves
Its portraiture, but some inconstant star
Between one foliaged lattice twinkling fair,
Or, painted bird, sleeping beneath the moon,
Or gorgeous insect floating motionless,
Unconscious of the day, ere yet his wings
Have spread their glories to the gaze of noon.

Hither the Poet came. His eyes beheld
Their own wan light through the reflected lines
Of his thin hair, distinct in the dark depth
Of that still fountain; as the human heart,
Gazing in dreams over the gloomy grave,
Sees its own treacherous likeness there. He heard
The motion of the leaves, the grass that sprung
Startled and glanced and trembled even to feel
An unaccustom'd presence, and the sound
Of the sweet brook that from the secret springs
Of that dark fountain rose. A Spirit seem'd
To stand beside him—clothed in no bright robes

Of shadowy silver or enshrining light,
Borrow'd from aught the visible world affords
Of grace, or majesty, or mystery;—
But undulating woods, and silent well,
And reaping rivulet, and evening gloom
Now deepening the dark shades, for speech assuming
Held commune with him, as if he and it
Were all that was,—only—when his regard
Was raised by intense pensiveness—two eyes,
Two starry eyes, hung in the gloom of thought,
And seem'd with their serene and azure smiles
To beckon him.

Obedient to the light
That shone within his soul, he went, pursuing
The windings of the dell.—The rivulet
Wanton and wild, through many a green ravine
Beneath the forest flow'd. Sometimes it fell
Among the moss with hollow harmony
Dark and profound. Now on the polish'd stones
It danced, like childhood laughing as it went:
Then through the plain in tranquil wanderings crept,
Reflecting every herb and drooping bud
That overhung its quietness.—"O stream!
Whose source is inaccessibly profound,
Whither do thy mysterious waters tend?
Thou imagest my life. Thy darksome stillness,
Thy dazzling waves, thy loud and hollow gulfs,
Thy searchless fountain and invisible course
Have each their type in me: And the wide sky,
And measureless ocean may declare as soon
What oozy cavern or what wandering cloud
Contains thy waters, as the universe
Tell where these living thoughts reside, when stretch'd
Upon thy flowers my bloodless limbs shall waste
I' the passing wind!"

Beside the grassy shore
Of the small stream he went; he did impress
On the green moss his tremulous step, that caught
Strong shuddering from his burning limbs. As one
Roused by some joyous madness from the couch
Of fever, he did move; yet, not like him,
Forgetful of the grave, where, when the flame
Of his frail exultation shall be spent,
He must descend. With rapid steps he went
Beneath the shade of trees, beside the flow
Of the wild babbling rivulet; and now
The forest's solemn canopies were changed
For the uniform and lightsome evening sky.
Grey rocks did peep from the spare moss, and stemm'd
The struggling brook: tall spires of windle-strae
Threw their thin shadows down the rugged slope,
And nought but gnarled roots of ancient pines,
Branchless and blasted, clench'd with grasping roots
The unwilling soil. A gradual change was here,
Yet ghastly. For, as fast years flow away,
The smooth brow gathers, and the air grows thin
And white; and where irradiate dewy eyes
Had shone, gleam stony orbs: so from his steps
Bright flowers departed, and the beautiful shade
Of the green groves, with all their odorous winds
And musical motions. Calm, he still pursued
The stream, that with a larger volume now
Roll'd through the labyrinthine dell; and there
Fretted a path through its descending curves
With its wintry speed. On every side now rose
Rocks, which, in unimaginable forms,
Lifted their black and barren pinnacles
In the light of evening, and its precipice
Obscuring the ravine, disclosed above,
'Mid toppling stones, black gulfs, and yawning caves,
Whose windings gave ten thousand various tongues
To the loud stream. Lo! Where the pass expands
Its stony jaws, the abrupt mountain breaks,
And seems, with its accumulated crags,
To overhang the world: for wide expand
Beneath the wan stars and descending moon
Islanded seas, blue mountains, mighty streams,
Dim tracts and vast, robed in the lustrous gloom
Of leaden-colour'd even, and fiery hills
Mingling their flames with twilight, on the verge
Of the remote horizon. The near scene,
In naked and severe simplicity,
Made contrast with the universe. A pine,
Rock-rooted, stretch'd athwart the vacancy
Its swinging boughs, to each inconstant blast
Yielding one only response at each pause,
In most familiar cadence, with the howl
The thunder and the hiss of homeless streams
Mingling its solemn song, whilst the broad river,
Foaming and hurrying o'er its rugged path,
Fell into that immeasurable void
Scattering its waters to the passing winds.

Yet the grey precipice, and solemn pine
And torrent, were not all;—one silent nook
Was there. Even on the edge of that vast mountain,
Upheld by knotty roots and fallen rocks,
It overlook'd in its serenity
The dark earth, and the bending vault of stars.
It was a tranquil spot, that seem'd to smile
Even in the lap of horror. Ivy clasp'd
The fissured stones with its entwining arms,
And did embower with leaves for ever green,
And berries dark, the smooth and even space
Of its inviolated floor; and here
The children of the autumnal whirlwind bore,
In wanton sport, those bright leaves, whose decay,
Red, yellow, or etherially pale,
Rival the pride of summer. 'T is the haunt
Of every gentle wind, whose breath can teach
The wilds to love tranquillity. One step,
One human step alone, has ever broken
The stillness of its solitude:—one voice
Alone inspired its echoes;—even that voice
Which hither came, floating among the winds,
And led the loveliest among human forms
To make their wild haunts the depository
Of all the grace and beauty that endued
Its motions, render up its majesty,
Scatter its music on the unfeeling storm,
And to the damp leaves and blue cavern mould,
Nurses of rainbow flowers and branching moss,
Commit the colours of that varying cheek,
That snowy breast, those dark and drooping eyes.

The dim and horned moon hung low, and pour'd
A sea of lustre on the horizon's verge
That overflow'd its mountains. Yellow mist
Fill'd the unbounded atmosphere, and drank
Wan moonlight even to fullness: not a star

Shone, not a sound was heard; the very winds,
Danger's grim playmates, on that precipice
Slept, clasp'd in his embrace.—O, storm of death!
Whose sightless speed divides this sullen night:
And thou, colossal Skeleton, that, still
Guiding its irresistible career
In thy devastating omnipotence,
Art King of this frail world, from the red field
Of slaughter, from the reeking hospital,
The patriot's sacred couch, the snowy bed
Of innocence, the scaffold and the throne,
A mighty voice invokes thee. Ruin calls
His Brother Death. A rare and regal prey
He hath prepared, prowling around the world;
Glutted with which thou mayest repose, and men
Go to their graves like flowers or creeping worms,
Nor ever more offer at thy dark shrine
The unheeded tribute of a broken heart.

When on the threshold of the green recess
The wanderer's footsteps fell, he knew that death
Was on him. Yet a little, ere it fled,
Did he resign his high and holy soul
To images of the majestic past,
That paused within his passive being now,
Like winds that bear sweet music, when they breathe
Through some dim latticed chamber. He did place
His pale lean hand upon the rugged trunk
Of the old pine. Upon an ivied stone
Reclined his languid head; his limbs did rest,
Diffused and motionless, on the smooth brink
Of that obscurest chasm;—and thus he lay,
Surrendering to their final impulses
The hovering powers of life. Hope and Despair,
The torturers, slept: no mortal pain or fear
Marr'd his repose, the influxes of sense,
And his own being unalloy'd by pain,
Yet feebler and more feeble, calmly fed
The stream of thought, till he lay breathing there
At peace, and faiutly smiling:—his last sight
Was the great moon, which o'er the western line
Of the wide world her mighty horn suspended,
With whose dun beams inwoven darkness seem'd
To mingle. Now upon the jagged hills
It rests, and still as the divided frame
Of the vast meteor sunk, the Poet's blood,
That ever beat in mystic sympathy
With nature's ebb and flow, grew feebler still:
And when two lessening points of light alone
Gleam'd through the darkness, the alternate gasp
Of his faint respiration scarce did stir
The stagnate night:—till the minutest ray
Was quench'd, the pulse yet linger'd in his heart.
It paused—it flutter'd. But when heaven remain'd
Utterly black, the murky shades involved
An image, silent, cold, and motionless,
As their own voiceless earth and vacant air.
Even as a vapour fed with golden beams
That minister'd on sunlight, ere the west
Eclipses it, was now that wondrous frame—
No sense, no motion, no divinity—
A fragile lute, on whose harmonious strings
The breath of heaven did wander—a bright stream
Once fed with many-voiced waves—a dream
Of youth, which night and time have quench'd for ever,
Still, dark, and dry, and unremember'd now.

O, for Medea's wondrous alchymy,
Which wheresoe'er it fell made the earth gleam
With bright flowers, and the wintry boughs exhale
From vernal blooms fresh fragrance! O, that God,
Profuse of poisons, would concede the chalice
Which but one living man has drain'd, who now,
Vessel of deathless wrath, a slave that feels
No proud exemption in the blighting curse
He bears, over the world wanders for ever,
Lone as incarnate death! O, that the dream
Of dark magician in his vision'd cave,
Raking the cinders of a crucible
For life and power, even when his feeble hand
Shakes in its last decay, were the true law
Of this so lovely world! But thou art fled
Like some frail exhalation, which the dawn
Robes in its golden beams,—ah! thou hast fled!
The brave, the gentle, and the beautiful,
The child of grace and genius. Heartless things
Are done and said i' the world, and many worms
And beasts and men live on, and mighty Earth
From sea and mountain, city and wilderness,
In vesper low or joyous orison,
Lifts still its solemn voice:—but thou art fled—
Thou canst no longer know or love the shapes
Of this phantasmal scene, who have to thee
Been purest ministers, who are, alas!
Now thou art not. Upon those pallid lips
So sweet even in their silence, on those eyes
That image sleep in death, upon that form
Yet safe from the worm's outrage, let no tear
Be shed—not even in thought. Nor, when those hues
Are gone, and those divinest lineaments,
Worn by the senseless wind, shall live alone
In the frail pauses of this simple strain,
Let not high verse, mourning the memory
Of that which is no more, or painting's woe
Or sculpture, speak in feeble imagery
Their own cold powers. Art and eloquence,
And all the shows o' the world are frail and vain
To weep a loss that turns their light to shade.
It is a woe too "deep for tears," when all
Is reft at once, when some surpassing Spirit,
Whose light adorn'd the world around it, leaves
Those who remain behind, nor sobs nor groans,
The passionate tumult of a clinging hope;
But pale despair and cold tranquillity,
Nature's vast frame, the web of human things,
Birth and the grave, that are not as they were.

Rosalind and Helen;

A MODERN ECLOGUE.

ADVERTISEMENT.

The story of Rosalind and Helen is, undoubtedly, not an attempt in the highest style of poetry. It is in no degree calculated to excite profound meditation; and if, by interesting the affections and amusing the imagination, it awaken a certain ideal melancholy favourable to the reception of more important impressions, it will produce in the reader all that the writer experienced in the composition. I resigned myself, as I wrote, to the impulse of the feelings which moulded the conception of the story; and this impulse determined the pauses of a measure, which only pretends to be regular inasmuch as it corresponds with, and expresses, the irregularity of the imaginations which inspired it.

Naples, Dec. 20, 1818.

ROSALIND AND HELEN.

SCENE.—*The Shore of the Lake of Como.*

Rosalind, Helen, *and her Child.*

HELEN.

Come hither, my sweet Rosalind.
'T is long since thou and I have met;
And yet methinks it were unkind
Those moments to forget.
Come, sit by me. I see thee stand
By this lone lake, in this far land,
Thy loose hair in the light wind flying,
Thy sweet voice to each tone of even
United, and thine eyes replying
To the hues of yon fair heaven.
Come, gentle friend! wilt sit by me?
And be as thou wert wont to be
Ere we were disunited?
None doth behold us now: the power
That led us forth at this lone hour
Will be but ill requited
If thou depart in scorn: oh! come,
And talk of our abandon'd home.
Remember, this is Italy,
And we are exiles. Talk with me
Of that our land, whose wilds and floods,
Barren and dark although they be,
Were dearer than these chesnut woods;
Those heathy paths, that inland stream,
And the blue mountains, shapes which seem
Like wrecks of childhood's sunny dream:
Which that we have abandon'd now,
Weighs on the heart like that remorse
Which alter'd friendship leaves. I seek
No more our youthful intercourse.
That cannot be! Rosalind, speak,
Speak to me. Leave me not.—When morn did come,
When evening fell upon our common home,
When for one hour we parted,—do not frown:
I would not chide thee, though thy faith is broken;
But turn to me. Oh! by this cherish'd token,
Of woven hair, which thou wilt not disown,
Turn, as 't were but the memory of me,
And not my scorned self who pray'd to thee.

ROSALIND.

Is it a dream, or do I see
And hear frail Helen? I would flee
Thy tainting touch; but former years
Arise, and bring forbidden tears;
And my o'erburthen'd memory
Seeks yet its lost repose in thee.
I share thy crime. I cannot chuse
But weep for thee: mine own strange grief
But seldom stoops to such relief;
Nor ever did I love thee less,
Though mourning o'er thy wickedness
Even with a sister's woe. I knew
What to the evil world is due,
And therefore sternly did refuse
To link me with the infamy
Of one so lost as Helen. Now
Bewilder'd by my dire despair,
Wondering I blush, and weep that thou
Shouldst love me still,—thou only!—There,
Let us sit on that grey stone,
Till our mournful talk be done.

HELEN.

Alas! not there; I cannot bear
The murmur of this lake to hear.
A sound from thee, Rosalind dear,
Which never yet I heard elsewhere
But in our native land, recurs,
Even here where now we meet. It stirs
Too much of suffocating sorrow!
In the dell of yon dark chesnut wood
Is a stone seat, a solitude
Less like our own. The ghost of peace
Will not desert this spot. To-morrow,
If thy kind feelings should not cease,
We may sit here.

ROSALIND.

Thou lead, my sweet,
And I will follow.

HENRY.

'T is Fenici's seat
Where you are going? This is not the way,
Mamma; it leads behind those trees that grow
Close to the little river.

HELEN.

Yes; I know:

I was bewilder'd. Kiss me, and be gay,
Dear boy, why do you sob?

HENRY.

I do not know:
But it might break any one's heart to see
You and the lady cry so bitterly.

HELEN.

It is a gentle child, my friend. Go home,
Henry, and play with Lilla till I come.
We only cried with joy to see each other;
We are quite merry now—Good night.

The boy
Lifted a sudden look upon his mother,
And in the gleam of forced and hollow joy
Which lighten'd o'er her face, laugh'd with the glee
Of light and unsuspecting infancy,
And whisper'd in her ear, « Bring home with you
That sweet strange lady-friend.» Then off he flew,
But stopp'd, and beckon'd with a meaning smile,
Where the road turn'd. Pale Rosalind the while,
Hiding her face, stood weeping silently.

In silence then they took the way
Beneath the forest's solitude.
It was a vast and antique wood,
Through which they took their way;
And the grey shades of evening
O'er that green wilderness did fling
Still deeper solitude.
Pursuing still the path that wound
The vast and knotted trees around
Through which slow shades were wandering,
To a deep lawny dell they came,
To a stone seat beside a spring,
O'er which the column'd wood did frame
A roofless temple, like the fane
Where, ere new creeds could faith obtain,
Man's early race once knelt beneath
The overhanging deity.
O'er this fair fountain hung the sky,
Now spangled with rare stars. The snake,
The pale snake, that with eager breath
Creeps here his noontide thirst to slake,
Is beaming with many a mingled hue,
Shed from yon dome's eternal blue,
When he floats on that dark and lucid flood
In the light of his own loveliness;
And the birds that in the fountain dip
Their plumes, with fearless fellowship
Above and round him wheel and hover.
The fitful wind is heard to stir
One solitary leaf on high;
The chirping of the grasshopper
Fills every pause. There is emotion
In all that dwells at noontide here:
Then, through the intricate wild wood,
A maze of life and light and motion
Is woven. But there is stillness now;
Gloom, and the trance of Nature now:
The snake is in his cave asleep;
The birds are on the branches dreaming:
Only the shadows creep;
Only the glow-worm is gleaming;
Only the owls and the nightingales
Wake in this dell when day-light fails,
And grey shades gather in the woods:
And the owls have all fled far away
In a merrier glen to hoot and play,
For the moon is veil'd and sleeping now.
The accustom'd nightingale still broods
On her accustom'd bough,
But she is mute; for her false mate
Has fled and left her desolate.

This silent spot tradition old
Had peopled with the spectral dead.
For the roots of the speaker's hair felt cold
And stiff, as with tremulous lips he told
That a hellish shape at midnight led
The ghost of a youth with hoary hair,
And sate on the seat beside him there,
Till a naked child came wandering by,
When the fiend would change to a lady fair!
A fearful tale! The truth was worse:
For here a sister and a brother
Had solemnized a monstrous curse,
Meeting in this fair solitude:
For beneath yon very sky,
Had they resign'd to one another
Body and soul. The multitude,
Tracking them to the secret wood,
Tore limb from limb their innocent child,
And stabb'd and trampled on its mother;
But the youth, for God's most holy grace,
A priest saved to burn in the market-place.

Duly at evening Helen came
To this lone silent spot,
From the wrecks of a tale of wilder sorrow
So much of sympathy to borrow
As soothed her own dark lot.
Duly each evening from her home,
With her fair child would Helen come
To sit upon that antique seat,
While the hues of day were pale;
And the bright boy beside her feet
Now lay, lifting at intervals
His broad blue eyes on her;
Now, where some sudden impulse calls
Following. He was a gentle boy
And in all gentle sports took joy;
Oft in a dry leaf for a boat,
With a small feather for a sail,
His fancy on that spring would float,
If some invisible breeze might stir
Its marble calm: and Helen smiled
Through tears of awe on the gay child,
To think that a boy as fair as he,
In years which never more may be,
By that same fount, in that same wood,
The like sweet fancies had pursued;
And that a mother, lost like her,
Had mournfully sate watching him.
Then all the scene was wont to swim
Through the mist of a burning tear.

For many months had Helen known
This scene; and now she thither turn'd

Her footsteps, not alone.
The friend whose falsehood she had mourn'd,
Sate with her on that seat of stone.
Silent they sate; for evening,
And the power its glimpses bring
Had, with one awful shadow, quell'd
The passion of their grief. They sate
With linked hands, for unrepell'd
Had Helen taken Rosalind's.
Like the autumn wind, when it unbinds
The tangled locks of the nightshade's hair,
Which is twined in the sultry summer air
Round the walls of an outworn sepulchre,
Did the voice of Helen, sad and sweet,
And the sound of her heart that ever beat,
As with sighs and words she breathed on her,
Unbind the knots of her friend's despair,
Till her thoughts were free to float and flow;
And from her labouring bosom now,
Like the bursting of a prison'd flame,
The voice of a long-pent sorrow came.

ROSALIND.

I saw the dark earth fall upon
The coffin; and I saw the stone
Laid over him whom this cold breast
Had pillow'd to his nightly rest!
Thou knowest not, thou canst not know
My agony. Oh! I could not weep:
The sources whence such blessings flow
Were not to be approach'd by me!
But I could smile, and I could sleep,
Though with a self-accusing heart.
In morning's light, in evening's gloom,
I watch'd,—and would not thence depart,—
My husband's unlamented tomb.
My children knew their sire was gone,
But when I told them, « he is dead,»
They laugh'd aloud in frantic glee,
They clapp'd their hands and leap'd about,
Answering each other's ecstacy
With many a prank and merry shout.
But I sat silent and alone,
Wrapp'd in the mock of mourning weed.

They laugh'd, for he was dead; but I
Sate with a hard and tearless eye,
And with a heart which would deny
The secret joy it could not quell,
Low muttering o'er his loathed name;
Till from that self-contention came
Remorse where sin was none; a hell
Which in pure spirits should not dwell.

I 'll tell thee truth. He was a man
Hard, selfish, loving only gold,
Yet full of guile: his pale eyes ran
With tears, which each some falsehood told,
And oft his smooth and bridled tongue
Would give the lie to his flushing cheek:
He was a coward to the strong;
He was a tyrant to the weak,
On whom his vengeance he would wreak:
For scorn, whose arrows search the heart,
From many a stranger's eye would dart,
And on his memory cling, and follow
His soul to its home so cold and hollow.
He was a tyrant to the weak,
And we were such, alas the day!
Oft, when my little ones at play,
Were in youth's natural lightness gay,
Or if they listen'd to some tale
Of travellers, or of fairy land,—
When the light from the wood-fire's dying brand
Flash'd on their faces,—if they heard
Or thought they heard upon the stair
His footstep, the suspended word
Died on my lips: we all grew pale;
The babe at my bosom was hush'd with fear
If it thought it heard its father near;
And my two wild boys would near my knee
Cling, cow'd and cowering fearfully.

I 'll tell the truth: I loved another.
His name in my ear was ever ringing,
His form to my brain was ever clinging;
Yet if some stranger breathed that name,
My lips turn'd white, and my heart beat fast:
My nights were once haunted by dreams of flame,
My days were dim in the shadow cast,
By the memory of the same!
Day and night, day and night,
He was my breath and life and light,
For three short years, which soon were past.
On the fourth, my gentle mother
Led me to the shrine, to be
His sworn bride eternally.
And now we stood on the altar stair,
When my father came from a distant land,
And with a loud and fearful cry,
Rush'd between us suddenly.
I saw the stream of his thin grey hair,
I saw his lean and lifted hand,
And heard his words,—and live! O God!
Wherefore do I live?—« Hold, hold!»
He cried,—« I tell thee 't is her brother!
Thy mother, boy, beneath the sod
Of yon church-yard rests in her shroud so cold.
I am now weak, and pale, and old:
We were once dear to one another,
I and that corpse! Thou art our child!»
Then with a laugh both long and wild
The youth upon the pavement fell:
They found him dead! All look'd on me,
The spasms of my despair to see;
But I was calm. I went away;
I was clammy-cold like clay!
I did not weep—I did not speak;
But day by day, week after week,
I walk'd about like a corpse alive!
Alas! sweet friend, you must believe
This heart is stone—it did not break.

My father lived a little while,
But all might see that he was dying,
He smiled with such a woeful smile!
When he was in the church-yard lying
Among the worms, we grew quite poor,
So that no one would give us bread.
My mother look'd at me, and said

Faint words of cheer, which only meant
That she could die and be content;
So I went forth from the same church door
To another husband's bed.
And this was he who died at last,
When weeks and months and years had past,
Through which I firmly did fulfil
My duties, a devoted wife,
With the stern step of vanquish'd will,
Walking beneath the night of life,
Whose hours extinguish'd, like slow rain
Falling for ever, pain by pain,
The very hope of death's dear rest;
Which, since the heart within my breast
Of natural life was dispossest,
Its strange sustainer there had been.

When flowers were dead, and grass was green
Upon my mother's grave,—that mother
Whom to outlive, and cheer, and make
My wan eyes glitter for her sake,
Was my vow'd task, the single care
Which once gave life to my despair,—
When she was a thing that did not stir,
And the crawling worms were cradling her
To a sleep more deep and so more sweet
Than a baby's rock'd on its nurse's knee,
I lived; a living pulse then beat
Beneath my heart that awaken'd me.
What was this pulse so warm and free?
Alas! I knew it could not be
My own dull blood: 't was like a thought
Of liquid love, that spread and wrought
Under my bosom and in my brain.
And crept with the blood through every vein;
And hour by hour, day after day,
The wonder could not charm away,
But laid in sleep, my wakeful pain,
Until I knew it was a child,
And then I wept. For long, long years
These frozen eyes had shed no tears:
But now—'t was the season fair and mild
When April has wept itself to May:
I sate through the sweet sunny day
By my window bower'd round with leaves,
And down my cheeks the quick tears ran
Like twinkling rain-drops from the eaves,
When warm spring showers are passing o'er:
O Helen, none can ever tell
The joy it was to weep once more!

I wept to think how hard it were
To kill my babe, and take from it
The sense of light, and the warm air,
And my own fond and tender care,
And love and smiles; ere I knew yet
That these for it might, as for me,
Be the masks of a grinning mockery.
And haply, I would dream, 't were sweet
To feed it from my faded breast,
Or mark my own heart's restless beat
Rock it to its untroubled rest,
And watch the growing soul beneath
Dawn in faint smiles; and hear its breath,
Half interrupted by calm sighs,
And search the depth of its fair eyes
For long departed memories!
And so I lived till that sweet load
Was lighten'd. Darkly forward flow'd
The stream of years, and on it bore
Two shapes of gladness to my sight;
Two other babes, delightful more
In my lost soul's abandon'd night,
Than their own country ships may be
Sailing towards wreck'd mariners,
Who cling to the rock of a wintry sea.
For each, as it came, brought soothing tears,
And a loosening warmth, as each one lay
Sucking the sullen milk away
About my frozen heart, did play,
And wean'd it, oh how painfully!—
As they themselves were wean'd each one
From that sweet food,—even from the thirst
Of death, and nothingness, and rest,
Strange inmate of a living breast!
Which all that I had undergone
Of grief and shame, since she, who first
The gates of that dark refuge closed,
Came to my sight, and almost burst
The seal of that Lethean spring;
But these fair shadows interposed:
For all delights are shadows now!
And from my brain to my dull brow
The heavy tears gather and flow:
I cannot speak—Oh let me weep!

The tears which fell from her wan eyes
Glimmer'd among the moonlight dew;
Her deep hard sobs and heavy sighs
Their echoes in the darkness threw.
When she grew calm, she thus did keep
The tenor of her tale:—

He died,
I know not how. He was not old,
If age be number'd by its years;
But he was bow'd and bent with fears,
Pale with the quenchless thirst of gold,
Which, like fierce fever, left him weak;
And his strait lip and bloated cheek
Were warp'd in spasms by hollow sneers;
And selfish cares with barren plough,
Not age, had lined his narrow brow,
And foul and cruel thoughts, which feed
Upon the withering life within,
Like vipers on some poisonous weed.
Whether his ill were death or sin
None knew, until he died indeed,
And then men own'd they were the same.

Seven days within my chamber lay
That corse, and my babes made holiday:
At last, I told them what is death:
The eldest, with a kind of shame,
Came to my knees with silent breath,
And sate awe-stricken at my feet;
And soon the others left their play,
And sate there too. It is unmeet
To shed on the brief flower of youth
The withering knowledge of the grave;
From me remorse then wrung that truth.

I could not bear the joy which gave
Too just a response to mine own.
In vain. I dared not feign a groan;
And in their artless looks I saw,
Between the mists, of fear and awe,
That my own thought was theirs; and they
Express'd it not in words, but said,
Each in its heart, how every day
Will pass in happy work and play,
Now he is dead and gone away.

After the funeral all our kin
Assembled, and the will was read.
My friend, I tell thee, even the dead
Have strength, their putrid shrouds within,
To blast and torture. Those who live
Still fear the living, but a corse
Is merciless, and power doth give
To such pale tyrants half the spoil
He rends from those who groan and toil,
Because they blush not with remorse
Among their crawling worms. Behold,
I have no child! my tale grows old
With grief, and staggers: let it reach
The limits of my feeble speech,
And languidly at length recline
On the brink of its own grave and mine.

Thou knowest what a thing is Poverty
Among the fallen on evil days:
'T is Crime, and Fear, and Infamy,
And houseless Want in frozen ways
Wandering ungarmented, and Pain,
And, worse than all, that inward stain
Foul Self-contempt, which drowns in sneers
Youth's star-light smile, and makes its tears
First like hot gall, then dry for ever!
And well thou knowest a mother never
Could doom her children to this ill,
And well he knew the same. The will
Imported, that if e'er again
I sought my children to behold,
Or in my birth-place did remain
Beyond three days, whose hours were told,
They should inherit nought: and he,
To whom next came their patrimony,
A sallow lawyer, cruel and cold,
Aye watch'd me, as the will was read,
With eyes askance, which sought to see
The secrets of my agony;
And with close lips and anxious brow
Stood canvassing still to and fro
The chance of my resolve, and all
The dead man's caution just did call;
For in that killing lie 't was said—
«She is adulterous, and doth hold
In secret that the Christian creed
Is false, and therefore is much need
That I should have a care to save
My children from eternal fire.»
Friend, he was shelter'd by the grave,
And therefore dared to be a liar!
In truth, the Indian on the pyre
Of her dead husband, half consumed,
As well might there be false, as I
To those abhorr'd embraces doom'd,
Far worse than fire's brief agony.
As to the Christian creed, if true
Or false, I never question'd it:
I took it as the vulgar do:
Nor my vext soul had leisure yet
To doubt the things men say, or deem
That they are other than they seem.

All present who those crimes did hear,
In feign'd or actual scorn and fear,
Men, women, children, slunk away,
Whispering with self-contented pride,
Which half suspects its own base lie.
I spoke to none, nor did abide,
But silently I went my way,
Nor noticed I where joyously
Sate my two younger babes at play,
In the court-yard through which I past;
But went with footsteps firm and fast
Till I came to the brink of the ocean green,
And there, a woman with grey hairs,
Who had my mother's servant been,
Kneeling, with many tears and prayers,
Made me accept a purse of gold,
Half of the earnings she had kept
To refuge her when weak and old.

With woe, which never sleeps or slept,
I wander now. 'T is a vain thought—
But on yon alp, whose snowy head
'Mid the azure air is islanded
(We see it o'er the flood of cloud,
Which sunrise from its eastern caves
Drives, wrinkling into golden waves,
Hung with its precipices proud,
From that grey stone where first we met),
There, now who knows the dead feel nought?
Should be my grave; for he who yet
Is my soul's soul, once said: «'T were sweet
'Mid stars and lightnings to abide,
And winds and lulling snows, that beat
With their soft flakes the mountain wide,
When weary meteor lamps repose,
And languid storms their pinions close:
And all things strong and bright and pure,
And ever-during, aye endure:
Who knows, if one were buried there,
But these things might our spirits make,
Amid the all-surrounding air,
Their own eternity partake?»
Then 't was a wild and playful saying
At which I laugh'd or seem'd to laugh:
They were his words: now heed my praying,
And let them be my epitaph.
Thy memory for a term may be
My monument. Wilt remember me?
I know thou wilt, and canst forgive
Whilst in this erring world to live
My soul disdain'd not, that I thought
Its lying forms were worthy aught,
And much less thee.

HELEN.

O speak not so,
But come to me and pour thy woe
Into this heart, full though it be,

Aye overflowing with its own:
I thought that grief had sever'd me
From all beside who weep and groan;
Its likeness upon earth to be,
Its express image; but thou art
More wretched. Sweet! we will not part
Henceforth, if death be not division;
If so, the dead feel no contrition.
But wilt thou hear, since last we parted
All that has left me broken-hearted?

ROSALIND.

Yes, speak. The faintest stars are scarcely shorn
Of their thin beams by that delusive morn
Which sinks again in darkness, like the light
Of early love, soon lost in total night.

HELEN.

Alas! Italian winds are mild,
But my bosom is cold—wintry cold—
When the warm air weaves, among the fresh leaves,
Soft music, my poor brain is wild,
And I am weak like a nursling child,
Though my soul with grief is grey and old.

ROSALIND.

Weep not at thine own words, tho' they must make
Me weep. What is thy tale?

HELEN.

I fear 't will shake
Thy gentle heart with tears. Thou well
Rememberest when we met no more,
And, though I dwelt with Lionel,
That friendless caution pierced me sore
With grief; a wound my spirit bore
Indignantly, but when he died
With him lay dead both hope and pride.

Alas! all hope is buried now.
But then men dream'd the aged earth
Was labouring in that mighty birth,
Which many a poet and a sage
Has aye foreseen—the happy age
When truth and love shall dwell below
Among the works and ways of men;
Which on this world not power but will
Even now is wanting to fulfil.

Among mankind what thence befel
Of strife, how vain, is known too well;
When liberty's dear pæan fell
'Mid murderous howls. To Lionel,
Though of great wealth and lineage high,
Yet through those dungeon walls there came
Thy thrilling light, O Liberty!
And as the meteor's midnight flame
Startles the dreamer, sun-like truth
Flash'd on his visionary youth,
And fill'd him, not with love, but faith,
And hope, and courage mute in death;
For love and life in him were twins,
Born at one birth: in every other
First life then love its course begins,
Though they be children of one mother;
And so through this dark world they fleet
Divided, till in death they meet:
But he loved all things ever. Then
He pass'd amid the strife of men,
And stood at the throne of armed power
Pleading for a world of woe:
Secure as one on a rock-built tower
O'er the wreeks which the surge trails to and fro,
'Mid the passions wild of human kind
He stood, like a spirit calming them;
For, it was said, his words could bind
Like music the lull'd crowd, and stem
That torrent of unquiet dream
Which mortals truth and reason deem,
But is revenge and fear, and pride.
Joyous he was; and hope and peace
On all who heard him did abide,
Raining like dew from his sweet talk,
As where the evening star may walk
Along the brink of the gloomy seas,
Liquid mists of splendour quiver.

His very gestures touch'd to tears
The unpersuaded tyrant, never
So moved before: his presence stung
The torturers with their victim's pain,
And none knew how; and through their ears,
The subtle witchcraft of his tongue
Unlock'd the hearts of those who keep
Gold, the world's bond of slavery.
Men wonder'd, and some sneer'd to see
One sow what he could never reap:
For he is rich, they said, and young,
And might drink from the depths of luxury.
If he seeks fame, fame never crown'd
The champion of a trampled creed:
If he seeks power, power is enthroned
'Mid ancient rights and wrongs, to feed
Which hungry wolves with praise and spoil
Those who would sit near power must toil;
And such, there sitting, all may see.
What seeks he? All that others seek
He casts away, like a vile weed
Which the sea casts unreturningly.

That poor and hungry men should break
The laws which wreak them toil and scorn,
We understand; but Lionel
We know is rich and nobly born.
So wonder'd they; yet all men loved
Young Lionel, though few approved;
All but the priests, whose hatred fell
Like the unseen blight of a smiling day,
The withering honey-dew, which clings
Under the bright green buds of May,
Whilst they unfold their emerald wings:
For he made verses wild and queer
On the strange creeds priests hold so dear,
Because they bring them land and gold.
Of devils and saints and all such gear,
He made tales which whoso heard or read
Would laugh till he were almost dead.
So this grew a proverb: "Don't get old
Till Lionel's 'banquet in hell' you hear,
And then you will laugh yourself young again."
So the priests hated him, and he
Repaid their hate with cheerful glee.

Ah, smiles and joyance quickly died,
For public hope grew pale and dim
In an alter'd time and tide,
And in its wasting wither'd him,
As a summer flower that blows too soon
Droops in the smile of the waning moon,
When it scatters through an April night
The frozen dews of wrinkling blight.
None now hoped more. Grey Power was seated
Safely on her ancestral throne;
And Faith, the Python, undefeated,
Even to its blood-stain'd steps dragg'd on
Her foul and wounded train, and men
Were trampled and deceived again,
And words and shows again could bind
The wailing tribes of humankind
In scorn and famine. Fire and blood
Raged round the raging multitude,
To fields remote by tyrants sent
To be the scorned instrument
With which they drag from mines of gore
The chains their slaves yet ever wore;
And in the streets men met each other,
And by old altars and in halls,
And smiled again at festivals.
But each man found in his heart's brother
Cold cheer; for all, though half deceived,
The outworn creeds again believed,
And the same round anew began,
Which the weary world yet ever ran.

Many then wept, not tears, but gall
Within their hearts, like drops which fall
Wasting the fountain-stone away.
And in that dark and evil day
Did all desires and thoughts, that claim
Men's care—ambition, friendship, fame,
Love, hope, though hope was now despair—
Indue the colours of this change,
As from the all-surrounding air
The earth takes hues obscure and strange,
When storm and earthquake linger there.

And so, my friend, it then befel
To many, most to Lionel,
Whose hope was like the life of youth
Within him, and when dead, became
A spirit of unresting flame,
Which goaded him in his distress
Over the world's vast wilderness.
Three years he left his native land,
And on the fourth, when he return'd,
None knew him: he was stricken deep
With some disease of mind, and turn'd
Into aught unlike Lionel.
On him, on whom, did he pause in sleep,
Serenest smiles were wont to keep,
And, did he wake, a winged band
Of bright persuasions, which had fed
On his sweet lips and liquid eyes,
Kept their swift pinions half outspread,
To do on men his least command;
On him, whom once 't was paradise
Even to behold, now misery lay:
In his own heart 't was merciless,
To all things else none may express
Its innocence and tenderness.

'T was said that he had refuge sought
In love from his unquiet thought
In distant lands, and been deceived
By some strange show; for there were found,
Blotted with tears as those relieved
By their own words are wont to do,
These mournful verses on the ground,
By all who read them blotted too.

"How am I changed! my hopes were once like fire:
I loved, and I believed that life was love.
How am I lost! on wings of swift desire
Among Heaven's winds my spirit once did move.
I slept, and silver dreams did aye inspire
My liquid sleep. I woke, and did approve
All nature to my heart, and thought to make
A paradise of earth for one sweet sake.

"I love, but I believe in love no more:
I feel desire, but hope not. O, from sleep
Most vainly must my weary brain implore
Its long-lost flattery now. I wake to weep,
And sit through the long day gnawing the core
Of my bitter heart, and, like a miser, keep,
Since none in what I feel take pain or pleasure,
To my own soul its self-consuming treasure."

He dwelt beside me near the sea;
And oft in evening did we meet,
When the waves, beneath the star-light, flee
O'er the yellow sands with silver feet,
And talk'd. Our talk was sad and sweet,
Till slowly from his mien there pass'd
The desolation which it spoke;
And smiles,—as when the lightning's blast
Has parch'd some heaven-delighting oak,
The next spring shows leaves pale and rare,
But like flowers delicate and fair,
On its rent boughs,—again array'd
His countenance in tender light:
His words grew subtle fire, which made
The air his hearers breathed delight:
His motions, like the winds, were free,
Which bend the bright grass gracefully,
Then fade away in circlets faint:
And winged Hope, on which upborne
His soul seem'd hovering in his eyes,
Like some bright spirit newly-born
Floating amid the sunny skies,
Sprang forth from his rent heart anew.
Yet o'er his talk, and looks, and mien,
Tempering their loveliness too keen,
Past woe its shadow backward threw,
Till like an exhalation, spread
From flowers half drunk with evening dew,
They did become infectious: sweet
And subtle mists of sense and thought;
Which wrapt us soon, when we might meet,
Almost from our own looks and aught
The wide world holds. And so, his mind
Was heal'd, while mine grew sick with fear:
For ever now his health declined,
Like some frail bark which cannot bear
The impulse of an alter'd wind,

Though prosperous; and my heart grew full
'Mid its new joy of a new care:
For his cheek became, not pale, but fair,
As rose-o'ershadow'd lilies are;
And soon his deep and sunny hair,
In this alone less beautiful,
Like grass in tombs grew wild and rare.
The blood in his translucent veins
Beat, not like animal life, but love
Seem'd now its sullen springs to move,
When life had fail'd, and all its pains;
And sudden sleep would seize him oft
Like death, so calm, but that a tear,
His pointed eye-lashes between,
Would gather in the light serene
Of smiles, whose lustre bright and soft
Beneath lay undulating there.
His breath was like inconstant flame,
As eagerly it went and came;
And I hung o'er him in his sleep,
Till, like an image in the lake
Which rains disturb, my tears would break
The shadow of that slumber deep;
Then he would bid me not to weep,
And say with flattery false, yet sweet,
That death and he could never meet,
If I would never part with him.
And so we loved, and did unite
All that in us was yet divided:
For when he said, that many a rite,
By men to bind but once provided,
Could not be shared by him and me,
Or they would kill him in their glee,
I shudder'd, and then laughing said,
« We will have rites our faith to bind,
But our church shall be the starry night,
Our altar the grassy earth outspread,
And our priest the muttering wind.»

'T was sunset as I spoke: one star
Had scarce burst forth, when from afar
The ministers of misrule sent,
Seized upon Lionel, and bore
His chain'd limbs to a dreary tower,
In the midst of a city vast and wide.
For he, they said, from his mind had bent
Against their gods keen blasphemy,
For which, though his soul must roasted be
In hell's red lakes immortally,
Yet even on earth must he abide
The vengeance of their slaves—a trial,
I think, men call it. What avail
Are prayers and tears, which chase denial
From the fierce savage, nursed in hate?
What the knit soul that pleading and pale
Makes wan the quivering cheek, which late
It painted with its own delight?
We were divided. As I could,
I still'd the tingling of my blood,
And follow'd him in their despite,
As a widow follows, pale and wild,
The murderers and corse of her only child;
And when we came to the prison door,
And I pray'd to share his dungeon floor
With prayers which rarely have been spurn'd,
And when men drove me forth and I
Stared with blank frenzy on the sky,
A farewell look of love he turn'd,
Half calming me; then gazed awhile,
As if through that black and massy pile,
And through the crowd around him there,
And through the dense and murky air,
And the throng'd streets, he did espy
What poets know and prophecy;
And said, with voice that made them shiver
And clung like music in my brain,
And which the mute walls spoke again
Prolonging it with deepen'd strain—
« Fear not, the tyrants shall rule for ever,
Or the priests of the bloody faith;
They stand on the brink of that mighty river,
Whose waves they have tainted with death:
It is fed from the depths of a thousand dells,
Around them it foams, and rages, and swells,
And their swords and their sceptres I floating see,
Like wrecks in the surge of eternity.»

I dwelt beside the prison gate,
And the strange crowd that out and in
Pass'd, some, no doubt, with mine own fate,
Might have fretted me with its ceaseless din,
But the fever of care was louder within.
Soon, but too late, in penitence
Or fear, his foes released him thence:
I saw his thin and languid form,
As leaning on the jailor's arm,
Whose harden'd eyes grew moist the while,
To meet his mute and faded smile,
And hear his words of kind farewell,
He totter'd forth from his damp cell.
Many had never wept before,
From whom fast tears then gush'd and fell:
Many will relent no more,
Who sobb'd like infants then; aye, all
Who throng'd the prison's stony hall,
The rulers or the slaves of law,
Felt with a new surprise and awe
That they were human, till strong shame
Made them again become the same.
The prison blood-hounds, huge and grim,
From human looks the infection caught,
And fondly crouch'd and fawn'd on him;
And men have heard the prisoners say,
Who in their rotting dungeons lay,
That from that hour, throughout one day,
The fierce despair and hate which kept
Their trampled bosoms almost slept:
When, like twin vultures, they hung feeding
On each heart's wound, wide torn and bleeding,
Because their jailors' rule, they thought,
Grew merciful, like a parent's sway.

I know not how, but we were free:
And Lionel sate alone with me,
As the carriage drove through the streets apace;
And we look'd upon each other's face;
And the blood in our fingers intertwined
Ran like the thoughts of a single mind,
As the swift emotions went and came
Through the veins of each united frame.
So through the long long streets we past
Of the million-peopled city vast;

Which is that desart, where each one
Seeks his mate yet is alone,
Beloved and sought and mourn'd of none;
Until the clear blue sky was seen,
And the grassy meadows bright and green,
And then I sunk in his embrace,
Enclosing there a mighty space
Of love: and so we travell'd on
By woods, and fields of yellow flowers,
And towns, and villages, and towers,
Day after day of happy hours.
It was the azure time of June,
When the skies are deep in the stainless noon,
And the warm and fitful breezes shake
The fresh green leaves of the hedge-row briar,
And there were odours then to make
The very breath we did respire
A liquid element, whereon
Our spirits, like delighted things
That walk the air on subtle wings,
Floated and mingled far away,
'Mid the warm winds of the sunny day.
And when the evening star came forth
Above the curve of the new bent moon,
And light and sound ebb'd from the earth,
Like the tide of the full and weary sea
To the depths of its own tranquillity,
Our natures to its own repose
Did the earth's breathless sleep attune:
Like flowers, which on each other close
Their languid leaves when day-light's gone,
We lay, till new emotions came,
Which seem'd to make each mortal frame
One soul of interwoven flame,
A life in life, a second birth
In worlds diviner far than earth,
Which, like two strains of harmony
That mingle in the silent sky,
Then slowly disunite, past by
And left the tenderness of tears,
A soft oblivion of all fears,
A sweet sleep: so we travell'd on
Till we came to the home of Lionel,
Among the mountains wild and lone,
Beside the hoary western sea,
Which near the verge of the echoing shore
The massy forest shadow'd o'er.

The ancient steward, with hair all hoar,
As we alighted, wept to see
His master changed so fearfully;
And the old man's sobs did waken me
From my dream of unremaining gladness;
The truth flash'd o'er me like quick madness
When I look'd, and saw that there was death
On Lionel: yet day by day
He lived, till fear grew hope and faith,
And in my soul I dared to say,
Nothing so bright can pass away:
Death is dark, and foul, and dull,
But he is—O how beautiful!
Yet day by day he grew more weak,
And his sweet voice, when he might speak,
Which ne'er was loud, became more low;
And the light which flash'd through his waxen cheek
Grew faint, as the rose-like hues which flow
From sunset o'er the Alpine snow:
And death seem'd not like death in him,
For the spirit of life o'er every limb
Linger'd, a mist of sense and thought.
When the summer wind faint odours brought
From mountain flowers, even as it pass'd
His cheek would change, as the noon-day sea
Which the dying breeze sweeps fitfully.
If but a cloud the sky o'ercast,
You might see his colour come and go,
And the softest strain of music made
Sweet smiles, yet sad, arise and fade
Amid the dew of his tender eyes;
And the breath, with intermitting flow,
Made his pale lips quiver and part.
You might hear the beatings of his heart,
Quick, but not strong; and with my tresses
When oft he playfully would bind
In the bowers of mossy lonelinesses
His neck, and win me so to mingle
In the sweet depth of woven caresses,
And our faint limbs were intertwined,
Alas! the unquiet life did tingle
From mine own heart through every vein,
Like a captive in dreams of liberty,
Who beats the walls of his stony cell.
But his, it seem'd already free,
Like the shadow of fire surrounding me!
On my faint eyes and limbs did dwell
That spirit as it pass'd, till soon,
As a frail cloud wandering o'er the moon,
Beneath its light invisible,
Is seen when it folds its grey wings again
To alight on midnight's dusky plain,
I lived and saw, and the gathering soul
Pass'd from beneath that strong controul,
And I fell on a life which was sick with fear
Of all the woe that now I bear.

Amid a bloomless myrtle wood,
On a green and sea-girt promontory,
Not far from where we dwelt, there stood
In record of a sweet sad story,
An altar and a temple bright
Circled by steps, and o'er the gate
Was sculptured, «To Fidelity;»
And in the shrine an image sate,
All veil'd: but there was seen the light
Of smiles, which faintly could express
A mingled pain and tenderness
Through that ethereal drapery.
The left hand held the head, the right—
Beyond the veil, beneath the skin,
You might see the nerves quivering within—
Was forcing the point of a barbed dart
Into its side-convulsing heart.
An unskill'd hand, yet one inform'd
With genius, had the marble warm'd
With that pathetic life. This tale
It told: A dog had from the sea,
When the tide was raging fearfully,
Dragg'd Lionel's mother, weak and pale,
Then died beside her on the sand,
And she that temple thence had plann'd;
But it was Lionel's own hand
Had wrought the image. Each new moon

That lady did, in this lone fane,
The rites of a religion sweet,
Whose god was in her heart and brain:
The seasons' loveliest flowers were strewn
On the marble floor beneath her feet,
And she brought crowns of sea-buds white,
Whose odour is so sweet and faint,
And weeds, like branching chrysolite,
Woven in devices fine and quaint,
And tears from her brown eyes did stain
The altar: need but look upon
That dying statue, fair and wan,
If tears should cease, to weep again:
And rare Arabian odours came,
Though the myrtle copses steaming thence
From the hissing frankincense,
Whose smoke, wool-white as ocean foam,
Hung in dense flocks beneath the dome,
That ivory dome, whose azure night
With golden stars, like heaven, was bright
O'er the split cedars pointed flame;
And the lady's harp would kindle there
The melody of an old air,
Softer than sleep; the villagers
Mixt their religion up with her's,
And as they listen'd round, shed tears.

One eve he led me to this fane:
Daylight on its last purple cloud
Was lingering grey, and soon her strain
The nightingale began; now loud,
Climbing in circles the windless sky,
Now dying music; suddenly
'T is scatter'd in a thousand notes,
And now to the hush'd ear it floats
Like field smells known in infancy,
Then failing, soothes the air again.
We sate within that temple lone,
Pavilion'd round with Parian stone:
His mother's harp stood near, and oft
I had awaken'd music soft
Amid its wires: the nightingale
Was pausing in her heaven-taught tale:
«Now drain the cup,» said Lionel,
«Which the poet-bird has crown'd so well
With the wine of her bright and liquid song!
Heardst thou not sweet words among
That heaven-resounding minstrelsy!
Heardst thou not, that those who die
Awake in a world of extacy?
That love, when limbs are interwoven,
And sleep, when the night of life is cloven,
And thought, to the world's dim boundaries clinging,
And music, when one beloved is singing,
Is death? Let us drain right joyously
The cup which the sweet bird fills for me.»
He paused, and to my lips he bent
His own: like spirit his words went
Through all my limbs with the speed of fire;
And his keen eyes, glittering through mine,
Fill'd me with the flame divine,
Which in their orbs was burning far,
Like the light of an unmeasured star,
In the sky of midnight dark and deep:
Yes, 't was his soul that did inspire
Sounds, which my skill could ne'er awaken;
And first, I felt my fingers sweep
The harp, and a long quivering cry
Burst from my lips in symphony:
The dusk and solid air was shaken,
As swift and swifter the notes came
From my touch, that wander'd like quick flame,
And from my bosom, labouring
With some unutterable thing:
The awful sound of my own voice made
My faint lips tremble, in some mood
Of wordless thought Lionel stood
So pale, that even beside his cheek
The snowy column from its shade
Caught whiteness: yet his countenance
Raised upward, burn'd with radiance
Of spirit-piercing joy, whose light,
Like the moon struggling through the night
Of whirlwind-rifted clouds, did break
With beams that might not be confined.
I paused, but soon his gestures kindled
New power, as by the moving wind
The waves are lifted, and my song
To low soft notes now changed and dwindled,
And from the twinkling wires among,
My languid fingers drew and flung
Circles of life-dissolving sound,
Yet faint: in aery rings they bound
My Lionel, who, as every strain
Grew fainter but more sweet, his mien
Sunk with the sound relaxedly;
And slowly now he turn'd to me,
As slowly faded from his face
That awful joy: with looks serene
He was soon drawn to my embrace,
And my wild song then died away
In murmurs: words, I dare not say
We mix'd, and on his lips mine fed
Till they methought felt still and cold:
«What is it with thee, love?» I said;
No word, no look, no motion! yes,
There was a change, but spare to guess,
Nor let that moment's hope be told.
I look'd, and knew that he was dead,
And fell, as the eagle on the plain
Falls when life deserts her brain,
And the mortal lightning is veil'd again.

O that I were now dead! but such
Did they not, love, demand too much
Those dying murmurs? He forbad.
O that I once again were mad!
And yet, dear Rosalind, not so,
For I would live to share thy woe.
Sweet boy! did I forget thee too?
Alas, we know not what we do
When we speak words.

No memory more
Is in my mind of that sea-shore.
Madness came on me, and a troop
Of misty shapes did seem to sit
Beside me, on a vessel's poop,
And the clear north wind was driving it.
Then I heard strange tongues, and saw strange flowers,
And the stars methought grew unlike ours,

And the azure sky and the stormless sea
Made me believe that I had died,
And waked in a world, which was to me
Drear hell, though heaven to all beside.
Then a dead sleep fell on my mind,
Whilst animal life many long years
Had rescued from a chasm of tears;
And when I woke, I wept to find
That the same lady, bright and wise,
With silver locks and quick brown eyes,
The mother of my Lionel,
Had tended me in my distress,
And died some months before. Nor less
Wonder, but far more peace and joy
Brought in that hour my lovely boy;
For through that trance my soul had well
The impress of thy being kept;
And if I waked, or if I slept,
No doubt, though memory faithless be,
Thy image ever dwelt on me;
And thus, O Lionel! like thee
Is our sweet child. 'T is sure most strange
I knew not of so great a change,
As that which gave him birth, who now
Is all the solace of my woe.

That Lionel great wealth had left
By will to me, and that of all
The ready lies of law bereft,
My child and me might well befal.
But let me think not of the scorn,
Which from the meanest I have borne,
When, for my child's beloved sake,
I mix'd with slaves, to vindicate
The very laws themselves do make:
Let me not say scorn is my fate,
Lest I be proud, suffering the same
With those who live in deathless fame.

She ceased.—« Lo, where red morning thro' the woods
Is burning o'er the dew!» said Rosalind.
And with these words they rose, and towards the flood
Of the blue lake, beneath the leaves now wind
With equal steps and fingers intertwined:
Thence to a lonely dwelling, where the shore
Is shadow'd with rocks, and cypresses
Cleave with their dark green cones the silent skies,
And with their shadows the clear depths below,
And where a little terrace from its bowers,
Of blooming myrtle and faint lemon-flowers,
Scatters its sense-dissolving fragrance o'er
The liquid marble of the windless lake;
And where the aged forest's limbs look hoar,
Under the leaves which their green garments make,
They come: 't is Helen's home, and clean and white,
Like one which tyrants spare on our own land
In some such solitude, its casements bright
Shone through their vine-leaves in the morning sun,
And even within 't was scarce like Italy.
And when she saw how all things there were plann'd,
As in an English home, dim memory
Disturbed poor Rosalind: she stood as one
Whose mind is where his body cannot be,
Till Helen led her where her child yet slept,
And said, « Observe, that brow was Lionel's,
Those lips were his, and so he ever kept
One arm in sleep, pillowing his head with it.
You cannot see his eyes, they are two wells
Of liquid love: let us not wake him yet.»
But Rosalind could bear no more, and wept
A shower of burning tears, which fell upon
His face, and so his opening lashes shone
With tears unlike his own, as he did leap
In sudden wonder from his innocent sleep.

So Rosalind and Helen lived together
Thenceforth, changed in all else, yet friends again,
Such as they were, when o'er the mountain heather
They wander'd in their youth, through sun and rain.
And after many years, for human things
Change even like the ocean and the wind,
Her daughter was restored to Rosalind,
And in their circle thence some visitings
Of joy 'mid their new calm would intervene:
A lovely child she was, of looks serene,
And motions which o'er things indifferent shed
The grace and gentleness from whence they came.
And Helen's boy grew with her, and they fed
From the same flowers of thought, until each mind
Like springs which mingle in one flood became,
And in their union soon their parents saw
The shadow of the peace denied to them.
And Rosalind,—for when the living stem
Is cankered in its heart, the tree must fall,—
Died ere her time; and with deep grief and awe
The pale survivors follow'd her remains
Beyond the region of dissolving rains,
Up the cold mountain she was wont to call
Her tomb; and on Chiavenna's precipice
They raised a pyramid of lasting ice,
Whose polish'd sides, ere day had yet begun,
Caught the first glow of the unrisen sun,
The last, when it had sunk; and through the night
The charioteers of Arctos wheeled round
Its glittering point, as seen from Helen's home,
Whose sad inhabitants each year would come,
With willing steps climbing that rugged height,
And hang long locks of hair, and garlands bound
With amaranth flowers, which, in the clime's despite,
Filled the frore air with unaccustom'd light:
Such flowers, as in the wintry memory bloom
Of one friend left, adorn'd that frozen tomb.

Helen, whose spirit was of softer mould,
Whose sufferings too were less, death slowlier led
Into the peace of his dominion cold:
She died among her kindred, being old.
And know, that if love die not in the dead
As in the living, none of mortal kind
Are blest, as now Helen and Rosalind.

Adonais;

AN ELEGY ON THE DEATH OF JOHN KEATS.

Ἀστηρ πρὶν μὲν ἔλαμπες ἐνὶ ζωοῖσιν ἑῷος·
Νῦν δὲ θανὼν λάμπεις ἔσπερος ἐν φθιμένοις.

PLATO.

PREFACE.

Φάρμακον ἦλθε, Βίων, ποτὶ σὸν στόμα, φάρμακον εἶδες.
Πῶς τευ τοῖς χείλεσσι ποτέδραμε, κοὐκ ἐγλυκάνθη;
Τίς δὲ βροτὸς τοσσοῦτον ἀνάμερος, ἢ κεράσαι τοι,
Ἢ δοῦναι λαλέοντι τὸ φάρμακον; ἔκφυγεν ᾠδάν.

MOSCHUS, *Epitaph. Bion.*

It is my intention to subjoin to the London edition of this poem, a criticism upon the claims of its lamented object to be classed among the writers of the highest genius who have adorned our age. My known repugnance to the narrow principles of taste on which several of his earlier compositions were modelled, prove, at least that I am an impartial judge. I consider the fragment of Hyperion, as second to nothing that was ever produced by a writer of the same years.

John Keats, died at Rome of a consumption, in his twenty-fourth year, on the ——— of ——— 1821; and was buried in the romantic and lonely cemetery of the protestants in that city, under the pyramid which is the tomb of Cestius, and the massy walls and towers, now mouldering and desolate, which formed the circuit of ancient Rome. The cemetery is an open space among the ruins, covered in winter with violets and daisies. It might make one in love with death, to think that one should be buried in so sweet a place.

The genius of the lamented person to whose memory I have dedicated these unworthy verses, was not less delicate and fragile than it was beautiful; and where canker-worms abound, what wonder, if its young flower was blighted in the bud? The savage criticism on his Endymion, which appeared in the Quarterly Review, produced the most violent effect on his susceptible mind; the agitation thus originated ended in the rupture of a blood-vessel in the lungs; a rapid consumption ensued, and the succeeding acknowledgments from more candid critics, of the true greatness of his powers, were ineffectual to heal the wound thus wantonly inflicted.

It may be well said that these wretched men know not what they do. They scatter their insults and their slanders without heed as to whether the poisoned shaft lights on a heart made callous by many blows, or one, like Keats's, composed of more penetrable stuff. One of their associates, is, to my knowledge, a most base and unprincipled calumniator. As to «Endymion,» was it a poem, whatever might be its defects, to be treated contemptuously by those who had celebrated with various degrees of complacency and panegyric, «Paris,» and «Woman,» and a «Syrian Tale», and a long list of the illustrious obscure? Are these the men, who in their venal good nature, presumed to draw a parallel between the Rev. Mr Milman and Lord Byron? What gnat did they strain at here, after having swallowed all those camels? Against what woman taken in adultery, dares the foremost of these literary prostitutes to cast his opprobrious stone? Miserable man! you, one of the meanest, have wantonly defaced one of the noblest specimens of the workmanship of God. Nor shall it be your excuse, that, murderer as you are, you have spoken daggers, but used none.

The circumstances of the closing scene of poor Keats's life were not made known to me until the Elegy was ready for the press. I am given to understand that the wound which his sensitive spirit had received from the criticism of Endymion, was exasperated by the bitter sense of unrequited benefits; the poor fellow seems to have been hooted from the stage of life, no less by those on whom he had wasted the promise of his genius, than those on whom he had lavished his fortune and his care. He was accompanied to Rome, and attended in his last illness by Mr Severn, a young artist of the highest promise, who, I have been informed, «almost risked his own life, and sacrificed every prospect to unwearied attendance upon his dying friend.» Had I known these circumstances before the completion of my poem, I should have been tempted to add my feeble tribute of applause to the more solid recompense which the virtuous man finds in the recollection of his own motives. Mr Severn can dispense with a reward from «such stuff as dreams are made of.» His conduct is a golden augury of the success of his future career—may the unextinguished Spirit of his illustrious friend animate the creations of his pencil, and plead against Oblivion for his name!

ADONAIS.

I.

I WEEP for ADONAIS—he is dead!
O, weep for Adonais! though our tears
Thaw not the frost which binds so dear a head!
And thou, sad Hour, selected from all years
To mourn our loss, rouse thy obscure compeers,
And teach them thine own sorrow; say—with me
Died Adonais!—till the Future dares
Forget the Past, his fate and fame shall be
An echo and a light unto eternity!

II.

Where wert thou mighty Mother, when he lay,
When thy Son lay, pierced by the shaft which flies
In darkness? where was lorn Urania
When Adonais died? With veiled eyes,
'Mid list'ning Echoes, in her Paradise
She sate, while one, with soft enamour'd breath,
Rekindled all the fading melodies,
With which, like flowers that mock the corse beneath,
He had adorn'd and hid the coming bulk of death.

III.

O, weep for Adonais—he is dead!
Wake, melancholy Mother, wake and weep!
Yet wherefore? Quench within their burning bed
Thy fiery tears, and let thy loud heart keep,
Like his, a mute and uncomplaining sleep;
For he is gone, where all things wise and fair
Descend:—oh, dream not that the amorous Deep
Will yet restore him to the vital air;
Death feeds on his mute voice, and laughs at our despair.

IV.

Most musical of mourners, weep again!
Lament anew, Urania!—He died,
Who was the Sire of an immortal strain,
Blind, old, and lonely, when his country's pride,
The priest, the slave, and the liberticide,
Trampled and mock'd with many a loathed rite
Of lust and blood; he went, unterrified,
Into the gulf of death; but his clear sprite
Yet reigns o'er earth; the third among the sons of light.

V.

Most musical of mourners, weep anew!
Not all to that bright station dared to climb;
And happier they their happiness who knew,
Whose tapers yet burn through that night of time
In which suns perished; others more sublime,
Struck by the envious wrath of man or God,
Have sunk, extinct in their refulgent prime;
And some yet live, treading the thorny road,
Which leads, through toil and hate, to Fame's serene abode.

VI.

But now, thy youngest, dearest one, has perish'd,
The nursling of thy widowhood, who grew,
Like a pale flower by some sad maiden cherish'd,
And fed with true-love tears, instead of dew;
Most musical of mourners, weep anew!
Thy extreme hope, the loveliest and the last,
The bloom, whose petals nipt before they blew
Died on the promise of the fruit, is waste;
The broken lily lies—the storm is overpast.

VII.

To that high Capital, where kingly Death
Keeps his pale court in beauty and decay,
He came; and bought, with price of purest breath,
A grave among the eternal.—Come away!
Haste, while the vault of blue Italian day
Is yet his fitting charnel-roof! while still
He lies, as if in dewy sleep he lay;
Awake him not! surely he takes his fill
Of deep and liquid rest, forgetful of all ill.

VIII.

He will awake no more, oh, never more!—
Within the twilight chamber spreads apace
The shadow of white Death, and at the door
Invisible Corruption waits to trace
His extreme way to her dim dwelling-place;
The eternal Hunger sits, but pity and awe
Soothe her pale rage, nor dares she to deface
So fair a prey, till darkness, and the law
Of change, shall o'er his sleep the mortal curtain draw.

IX.

O, weep for Adonais!—The quick Dreams,
The passion-winged Ministers of thought,
Who were his flocks, whom near the living streams
Of his young spirit he fed, and whom he taught
The love which was its music, wander not,—
Wander no more, from kindling brain to brain,
But droop there, whence they sprung; and mourn their lot
Round the cold heart, where, after their sweet pain,
They ne'er will gather strength, or find a home again.

X.

And one with trembling hand clasps his cold head,
And fans him with her moonlight wings, and cries,
"Our love, our hope, our sorrow, is not dead;
See, on the silken fringe of his faint eyes,
Like dew upon a sleeping flower, there lies
A tear some Dream has loosen'd from his brain."
Lost Angel of a ruin'd Paradise
She knew not 't was her own; as with no stain
She faded, like a cloud which had outwept its rain.

XI.

One from a lucid urn of starry dew
Wash'd his light limbs, as if embalming them;
Another clipt her profuse locks, and threw
The wreath upon him, like an anadem,
Which frozen tears instead of pearls begem;
Another in her wilful grief would break
Her bow and winged reeds, as if to stem
A greater loss with one which was more weak;
And dull the barbed fire against his frozen cheek.

XII.

Another Splendour on his mouth alit,
That mouth, whence it was wont to draw the breath
Which gave it strength to pierce the guarded wit,
And pass into the panting heart beneath
With lightning and with music: the damp death
Quench'd its caress upon his icy lips;
And, as a dying meteor stains a wreath
Of moonlight vapour, which the cold night clips,
It flush'd through his pale limbs, and pass'd to its eclipse.

XIII.

And others came,—Desires and Adorations,
Winged Persuasions and veil'd Destinies,
Splendours, and Glooms, and glimmering Incarnations
Of hopes and fears, and twilight Phantasies;
And Sorrow, with her family of Sighs,
And Pleasure, blind with tears, led by the gleam
Of her own dying smile instead of eyes,
Came in slow pomp;—the moving pomp might seem
Like pageantry of mist on an autumnal stream

XIV.

All he had loved, and moulded into thought,
From shape, and hue, and odour, and sweet sound,
Lamented Adonais. Morning sought
Her eastern watch-tower, and her hair unbound,
Wet with the tears which should adorn the ground,
Dimm'd the aërial eyes that kindle day;
Afar the melancholy thunder moan'd,
Pale Ocean in unquiet slumber lay,
And the wild winds flew round, sobbing in their dismay.

XV.

Lost Echo sits amid the voiceless mountains,
And feeds her grief with his remember'd lay,
And will no more reply to winds or fountains,
Or amorous birds perch'd on the young green spray,
Or herdsman's horn, or bell at closing day;
Since she can mimic not his lips, more dear
Than those for whose disdain she pined away
Into a shadow of all sounds:—a drear
Murmur, between their songs, is all the woodmen hear.

XVI.

Grief made the young Spring wild, and she threw down
Her kindling buds, as if she Autumn were,
Or they dead leaves; since her delight is flown
For whom should she have waked the sullen year?
To Phœbus was not Hyacinth so dear,
Nor to himself Narcissus, as to both
Thou Adonais: wan they stand and sere
Amid the drooping comrades of their youth,
With dew all turn'd to tears; odour, to sighing ruth.

XVII.

Thy spirit's sister, the lorn nightingale
Mourns not her mate with such melodious pain;
Not so the eagle, who like thee could scale
Heaven, and could nourish in the sun's domain
Her mighty youth with morning, doth complain,
Soaring and screaming round her empty nest,
As Albion wails for thee: the curse of Cain
Light on his head who pierced thy innocent breast,
And seared the angel soul that was its earthly guest!

XVIII.

Ah woe is me! Winter is come and gone,
But grief returns with the revolving year;
The airs and streams renew their joyous tone;
The ants, the bees, the swallows reappear;
Fresh leaves and flowers deck the dead Season's bier;
The amorous birds now pair in every brake,
And build their mossy homes in field and brere,
And the green lizard, and the golden snake,
Like unimprison'd flames, out of their trance awake.

XIX.

Through wood and streamand, field and hill and Ocean,
A quickening life from the Earth's heart has burst,
As it has ever done, with change and motion,
From the great morning of the world when first
God dawn'd on Chaos; in its stream immersed,
The lamps of Heaven flash with a softer light;
All baser things pant with life's sacred thirst;
Diffuse themselves; and spend in love's delight,
The beauty and the joy of their renewed might.

XX.

The leprous corpse, touch'd by this spirit tender,
Exhales itself in flowers of gentle breath;
Like incarnations of the stars, when splendour
Is changed to fragrance, they illumine death,
And mock the merry worm that wakes beneath;
Nought we know, dies. Shall that alone which knows
Be as a sword consumed before the sheath
By sightless lightning?—th' intense atom glows
A moment, then is quench'd in a most cold repose.

XXI.

Alas! that all we loved of him should be,
But for our grief, as if it had not been,
And grief itself be mortal! Woe is me!
Whence are we, and why are we? of what scene
The actors or spectators? Great and mean
Meet mass'd in death, who lends what life must borrow.
As long as skies are blue, and fields are green,
Evening must usher night, night urge the morrow,
Month follow month with woe, and year wake year to sorrow.

XXII.

He will awake no more, oh, never more!
"Wake thou," cried Misery, "childless Mother, rise
Out of thy sleep, and slake, in thy heart's core,
A wound more fierce than his with tears and sighs."
And all the Dreams that watch'd Urania's eyes,
And all the Echoes whom their sister's song
Had held in holy silence, cried: "Arise!"
Swift as a Thought by the snake Memory stung,
From her ambrosial rest the fading Splendour sprung.

XXIII.

She rose like an autumnal Night, that springs
Out of the East, and follows wild and drear
The golden Day, which, on eternal wings,
Even as a ghost abandoning a bier,
Had left the Earth a corpse. Sorrow and fear
So struck, so roused, so rapt Urania;
So sadden'd round her like an atmosphere
Of stormy mist; so swept her on her way,
Even to the mournful place where Adonais lay.

XXIV.

Out of her secret Paradise she sped,
Through camps and cities rough with stone, and steel,
And human hearts, which to her aery tread
Yielding not, wounded the invisible
Palms of her tender feet where'er they fell:
And barbed tongues, and thoughts more sharp than they,
Rent the soft Form they never could repel,
Whose sacred blood, like the young tears of May,
Paved with eternal flowers that undeserving way.

XXV.

In the death-chamber for a moment Death,
Shamed by the presence of that living Might,
Blush'd to annihilation, and the breath
Revisited those lips, and life's pale light
Flash'd through those limbs, so late her dear delight.
"Leave me not wild and drear and comfortless,
As silent lightning leaves the starless night!
Leave me not!" cried Urania: her distress
Roused Death: Death rose and smiled, and met her vain caress.

XXVI.

« Stay yet a while! speak to me once again;
Kiss me, so long but as a kiss may live;
And in my heartless breast and burning brain
That word, that kiss shall all thoughts else survive,
With food of saddest memory kept alive,
Now thou art dead, as if it were a part
Of thee, my Adonais! I would give
All that I am to be as thou now art!
But I am chain'd to Time, and cannot thence depart!

XXVII.

« O gentle child, beautiful as thou wert,
Why didst thou leave the trodden paths of men
Too soon, and with weak hands though mighty heart
Dare the unpastured dragon in his den?
Defenceless as thou wert, oh! where was then
Wisdom the mirror'd shield, or scorn the spear?
Or hadst thou waited the full cycle, when
Thy spirit should have fill'd its crescent sphere,
The monsters of life's waste had fled from thee like deer.

XXVIII.

« The herded wolves, bold only to pursue;
The obscene ravens, clamorous o'er the dead;
The, vultures to the conqueror's banner true,
Who feed where Desolation first has fed,
And whose wings rain contagion;—how they fled,
When, like Apollo, from his golden bow,
The Pythian of the age one arrow sped
And smiled!—The spoilers tempt no second blow,
They fawn on the proud feet that spurn them as they go.

XXIX.

« The sun comes forth, and many reptiles spawn;
He sets, and each ephemeral insect then
Is gather'd into death without a dawn,
And the immortal stars awake again;
So is it in the world of living men:
A godlike mind soars forth, in its delight
Making earth bare and veiling heaven, and when
It sinks, the swarms that dimm'd or shared its light
Leave to its kindred lamps the spirit's awful night.»

XXX.

Thus ceased she: and the mountain shepherds came,
Their garlands sere, their magic mantles rent;
The Pilgrim of Eternity, whose fame
Over his living head like Heaven is bent,
An early but enduring monument,
Came, veiling all the lightnings of his song
In sorrow; from her wilds Ierne sent
The sweetest lyrist of her saddest wrong,
And love taught grief to fall like music from his tongue.

XXXI.

'Midst others of less note, came one frail Form,
A phantom among men; companionless
As the last cloud of an expiring storm
Whose thunder is its knell; he, as I guess,
Had gazed on Nature's naked loveliness,
Actæon-like, and now he fled astray
With feeble steps o'er the world's wilderness,
And his own thoughts, along that rugged way,
Pursued, like raging hounds, their father and their prey.

XXXII.

A pard-like Spirit beautiful and swift—
A Love in desolation masked;—a Power
Girt round with weakness;—it can scarce uplift
The weight of the superincumbent hour;
It is a dying lamp, a falling shower,
A breaking billow;—even whilst we speak
Is it not broken? On the withering flower
The killing sun smiles brightly: on a cheek
The life can burn in blood, even while the heart may break.

XXXIII.

His head was bound with pansies over-blown,
And faded violets, white, and pied, and blue;
And a light spear topped with a cypress cone,
Round whose rude shaft dark ivy-tresses grew
Yet dripping with the forest's noonday dew,
Vibrated, as the ever-beating heart
Shook the weak hand that grasp'd it; of that crew
He came the last, neglected and apart;
A herd-abandon'd deer, struck by the hunter's dart.

XXXIV.

All stood aloof, and at his partial moan
Smiled through their tears; well knew that gentle band
Who in another's fate now wept his own;
As in the accents of an unknown land
He sang new sorrow; sad Urania scann'd
The Stranger's mien, and murmur'd: « Who art thou?»
He answer'd not, but with a sudden hand
Made bare his branded and ensanguined brow,
Which was like Cain's or Christ's,—Oh! that it should be so!

XXXV.

What softer voice is hushed over the dead?
Athwart what brow is that dark mantle thrown?
What form leans sadly o'er the white death-bed,
In mockery of monumental stone,
The heavy heart heaving without a moan?
If it be He, who, gentlest of the wise,
Taught, soothed, loved, honour'd the departed one;
Let me not vex, with inharmonious sighs,
The silence of that heart's accepted sacrifice.

XXXVI.

Our Adonais has drunk poison—oh!
What deaf and viperous murderer could crown
Life's early cup with such a draught of woe?
The nameless worm would now itself disown:
It felt, yet could escape the magic tone
Whose prelude held all envy, hate, and wrong,
But what was howling in one breast alone,
Silent with expectation of the song,
Whose master's hand is cold, whose silver lyre unstrung.

XXXVII.

Live thou, whose infamy is not thy fame!
Live! fear no heavier chastisement from me,
Thou noteless blot on a remember'd name!
But be thyself, and know thyself to be!
And ever at thy season be thou free
To spill the venom, when thy fangs o'erflow:
Remorse and Self-contempt shall cling to thee;
Hot Shame shall burn upon thy secret brow,
And like a beaten hound tremble thou shalt—as now.

XXXVIII.

Nor let us weep that our delight is fled
Far from these carrion-kites that scream below;
He wakes or sleeps with the enduring dead;
Thou canst not soar where he is sitting now.—
Dust to the dust! but the pure spirit shall flow
Back to the burning fountain whence it came,
A portion of the Eternal, which must glow
Through time and change, unquenchably the same,
Whilst thy cold embers choke the sordid hearth of shame.

XXXIX.

Peace, peace! he is not dead, he doth not sleep—
He hath awaken'd from the dream of life—
'T is we, who, lost in stormy visions, keep
With phantoms an unprofitable strife,
And in mad trance, strike with our spirit's knife
Invulnerable nothings—*We* decay
Like corpses in a charnel; fear and grief
Convulse us and consume us day by day,
And cold hopes swarm like worms within our living clay.

XL.

He has outsoar'd the shadow of our night;
Envy and calumny, and hate and pain,
And that unrest which men miscall delight,
Can touch him not and torture not again;
From the contagion of the world's slow stain
He is secure, and now can never mourn
A heart grown cold, a head grown grey in vain;
Nor, when the spirit's self has ceased to burn,
With sparkless ashes load an unlamented urn.

XLI.

He lives, he wakes—'t is Death is dead, not he;
Mourn not for Adonais.—Thou young Dawn
Turn all thy dew to splendour, for from thee
The spirit thou lamentest is not gone;
Ye caverns and ye forests, cease to moan!
Cease ye faint flowers and fountains, and thou Air,
Which like a mourning veil thy scarf hadst thrown
O'er the abandon'd Earth, now leave it bare
Even to the joyous stars which smile on its despair!

XLII.

He is made one with Nature: there is heard
His voice in all her music, from the moan
Of thunder, to the song of night's sweet bird;
He is a presence to be felt and known
In darkness and in light, from herb and stone,
Spreading itself where'er that Power may move
Which has withdrawn his being to its own;
Which wields the world with never-wearied love,
Sustains it from beneath, and kindles it above.

XLIII.

He is a portion of the loveliness
Which once he made more lovely: he doth bear
His part, while the one Spirit's plastic stress
Sweeps through the dull dense world, compelling there
All new successions to the forms they wear;
Torturing th' unwilling dross that checks its flight
To its own likeness, as each mass may bear;
And bursting in its beauty and its might
From trees and beasts and men into the Heaven's light.

XLIV.

The splendours of the firmament of time
May be eclipsed, but are extinguish'd not;
Like stars to their appointed height they climb,
And death is a low mist which cannot blot
The brightness it may veil. When lofty thought
Lifts a young heart above its mortal lair,
And love and life contend in it, for what
Shall be its earthly doom, the dead live there
And move like winds of light on dark and stormy air.

XLV.

The inheritors of unfulfill'd renown
Rose from their thrones, built beyond mortal thought,
Far in the Unapparent. Chatterton
Rose pale, his solemn agony had not
Yet faded from him; Sidney, as he fought
And as he fell, and as he lived and loved,
Sublimely mild, a Spirit without spot,
Arose; and Lucan, by his death approved:
Oblivion as they rose shrank like a thing reproved.

XLVI.

And many more, whose names on earth are dark,
But whose transmitted effluence cannot die
So long as fire outlives the parent spark,
Rose, robed in dazzling immortality.
« Thou art become as one of us, » they cry,
« It was for thee yon kingless sphere has long
Swung blind in unascended majesty,
Silent alone amid a Heaven of Song.
Assume thy winged throne, thou Vesper of our throng! »

XLVII.

Who mourns for Adonais? oh come forth,
Fond wretch! and know thyself and him aright.
Clasp with thy panting soul the pendulous Earth;
As from a centre, dart thy spirit's light
Beyond all worlds, until its spacious might
Satiate the void circumference: then shrink
Even to a point within our day and night;
And keep thy heart light, lest it make thee sink
When hope has kindled hope, and lured thee to the brink.

XLVIII.

Or go to Rome, which is the sepulchre,
O, not of him, but of our joy: 't is nought
That ages, empires, and religions there
Lie buried in the ravage they have wrought;
For such as he can lend,—they borrow not
Glory from those who made the world their prey;
And he is gather'd to the kings of thought
Who waged contention with their time's decay,
And of the past are all that cannot pass away.

XLIX.

Go thou to Rome,—at once the Paradise,
The grave, the city, and the wilderness;
And where its wrecks like shatter'd mountains rise,
And flowering weeds, and fragrant copses dress
The bones of Desolation's nakedness,
Pass, till the Spirit of the spot shall lead
Thy footsteps to a slope of green access,
Where, like an infant's smile, over the dead,
A light of laughing flowers along the grass is spread.

L.

And grey walls moulder round, on which dull Time
Feeds, like slow fire upon a hoary brand;
And one keen pyramid with wedge sublime,
Pavilioning the dust of him who plann'd
This refuge for his memory, doth stand
Like flame transform'd to marble; and beneath,
A field is spread, on which a newer band
Have pitch'd in Heaven's smile their camp of death,
Welcoming him we lose with scarce extinguish'd breath.

LI.

Here, pause: these graves are all too young as yet
To have outgrown the sorrow which consign'd
Its charge to each; and if the seal is set,
Here, on one fountain of a mourning mind,
Break it not thou! too surely shalt thou find
Thine own well full, if thou returnest home,
Of tears and gall. From the world's bitter wind
Seek shelter in the shadow of the tomb.
What Adonais is, why fear we to become?

LII.

The One remains, the many change and pass;
Heaven's light for ever shines, Earth's shadows fly;
Life, like a dome of many-colour'd glass,
Stains the white radiance of Eternity,
Until Death tramples it to fragments.—Die,
If thou wouldst be with that which thou dost seek!
Follow where all is fled!—Rome's azure sky,
Flowers, ruins, statues, music, words, are weak
The glory they transfuse with fitting truth to speak.

LIII.

Why linger, why turn back, why shrink, my Heart?
Thy hopes are gone before: from all things here
They have departed; thou shouldst now depart!
A light is passed from the revolving year,
And man, and woman; and what still is dear
Attracts to crush, repels to make thee wither.
The soft sky smiles,—the low wind whispers near:
'T is Adonais calls! oh, hasten thither,
No more let Life divide what Death can join together.

LIV.

That Light whose smile kindles the Universe,
That Beauty in which all things work and move,
That Benediction which the eclipsing Curse
Of birth can quench not, that sustaining Love
Which through the web of being blindly wove
By man and beast and earth and air and sea,
Burns bright or dim, as each are mirrors of
The fire for which all thirst; now beams on me,
Consuming the last clouds of cold mortality.

LV.

The breath whose might I have invoked in song
Descends on me; my spirit's bark is driven
Far from the shore, far from the trembling throng
Whose sails were never to the tempest given;
The massy earth and sphered skies are riven!
I am borne darkly, fearfully, afar;
Whilst burning through the inmost veil of Heaven,
The soul of Adonais, like a star
Beacons from the abode where the Eternal are.

Epipsychidion;

VERSES ADDRESSED TO THE NOBLE AND UNFORTUNATE LADY EMILIA V——,

NOW IMPRISONED IN THE CONVENT OF ——.

L' anima amante si slancia fuori del creato, e si crea nell' infinito un Mondo tutto per esse, diverso assai da questo oscuro e pauroso Laratro.
HER OWN WORDS.

ADVERTISEMENT.

(BY A FRIEND OF THE AUTHOR.)

THE Writer of the following Lines died at Florence, as he was preparing for a voyage to one of the wildest of the Sporades, which he had bought, and where he had fitted up the ruins of an old building, and where it was his hope to have realised a scheme of life, suited perhaps to that happier and better world of which he is now an inhabitant, but hardly practicable in this. His life was singular; less on account of the romantic vicissitudes which diversified it, than the ideal tinge which it received from his own character and feelings. The present Poem, like the Vita Nuova of Dante, is sufficiently intelligible to a certain class of readers without a matter-of-fact history of the circumstances to which it relates; and to a certain other class it must ever remain incomprehensible, from a defect of a common organ of perception for the ideas of which it treats. Not but that, « gran vergogna sarebbe a colui, che rimasse cosa sotto veste di figura, o di colore rettorico: e domandato non sapesse denudare le sue parole da cotal veste, in guisa che avessero verace intendimento.»

The present poem appears to have been intended by the Writer as the dedication to some longer one. The stanza prefixed to the poem is almost a literal translation from Dante's famous Canzone,

Voi, ch' intendendo, il terzo ciel movete, etc.

The presumptuous application of the concluding lines to his own composition will raise a smile at the expense of my unfortunate friend: be it a smile not of contempt, but pity.

S.

EPIPSYCHIDION.

My Song, I fear that thou wilt find but few
Who fitly shall conceive thy reasoning,
Of such hard matter dost thou entertain;
Whence, if by misadventure, chance should bring
Thee to base company (as chance may do),
Quite unaware of what thou dost contain,
I prithee, comfort thy sweet self again,
My last delight! tell them that they are dull,
And bid them own that thou art beautiful.

Sweet Spirit! Sister of that orphan one,
Whose empire is the name thou weepest on,
In my heart's temple I suspend to thee
These votive wreaths of wither'd memory.

Poor captive bird! who, from thy narrow cage,
Pourest such music, that it might assuage
The rugged hearts of those who prison'd thee,
Were they not deaf to all sweet melody;
This song shall be thy rose: its petals pale
Are dead, indeed, my adored Nightingale!
But soft and fragrant is the faded blossom,
And it has no thorn left to wound thy bosom.

High, spirit-winged Heart! who dost for ever
Beat thine unfeeling bars with vain endeavour,
Till those bright plumes of thought, in which array'd
It over-soared this low and worldly shade,
Lie shatter'd; and thy panting, wounded breast
Stains with dear blood its unmaternal nest!
I weep vain tears: blood would less bitter be,
Yet pour'd forth gladlier, could it profit thee.

Seraph of Heaven! too gentle to be human,
Veiling beneath that radiant form of Woman
All that is insupportable in thee
Of light, and love, and immortality!
Sweet Benediction in the eternal curse!
Veil'd Glory of this lampless Universe!
Thou Moon beyond the clouds! Thou living Form
Among the Dead! Thou Star above the Storm!
Thou Wonder, and thou Beauty, and thou Terror!
Thou Harmony of Nature's art! Thou Mirror
In whom, as in the splendour of the Sun,
All shapes look glorious which thou gazest on!
Ay, even the dim words which obscure thee now
Flash, lightning-like, with unaccustom'd glow;
I pray thee that thou blot from this sad song
All of its much mortality and wrong,
With those clear drops, which start like sacred dew
From the twin lights thy sweet soul darkens through,
Weeping, till sorrow becomes ecstasy:
Then smile on it, so that it may not die.

I never thought before my death to see
Youth's vision thus made perfect. Emily,
I love thee; though the world by no thin name
Will hide that love, from its unvalued shame,
Would we two had been twins of the same mother!
Or, that the name my heart lent to another
Could be a sister's bond for her and thee,
Blending two beams of one eternity!
Yet were one lawful and the other true,
These names, though dear, could paint not, as is due,
How beyond refuge I am thine. Ah me!
I am not thine: I am a part of *thee*.

Sweet Lamp! my moth-like Muse has burnt its wings;
Or, like a dying swan who soars and sings,
Young Love should teach Time, in his own grey style,
All that thou art. Art thou not void of guile,
A lovely soul form'd to be blest and bless?
A well of scal'd and secret happiness,
Whose waters like blithe light and music are,
Vanquishing dissonance and gloom? A Star
Which moves not in the moving Heavens alone?
A smile amid dark frowns? a gentle tone
Amid rude voices? a beloved light?
A Solitude, a Refuge, a Delight?
A lute, which those whom love has taught to play
Make music on, to soothe the roughest day,
And lull fond grief asleep? A buried treasure?
A cradle of young thoughts of wingless pleasure?
A violet-shrouded grave of Woe?—I measure
The world of fancies, seeking one like thee,
And find—alas! mine own infirmity.

She met me, Stranger, upon life's rough way,
And lured me towards sweet Death; as Night by Day,
Winter by Spring, or Sorrow by swift Hope,
Led into light, life, peace. An antelope,
In the suspended impulse of its lightness,
Were less ethereally light: the brightness
Of her divinest presence trembles through
Her limbs, as underneath a cloud of dew
Embodied in the windless Heaven of June,
Amid the splendour-winged stars, the Moon
Burns, inextinguishably beautiful:
And from her lips, as from a hyacinth full
Of honey-dew, a liquid murmur drops,
Killing the sense with passion; sweet as stops
Of planetary music heard in trance.
In her mild lights the starry spirits dance,
The sun-beams of those wells which ever leap
Under the lightnings of the soul—too deep
For the brief fathom-line of thought or sense.
The glory of her being, issuing thence,
Stains the dead, blank, cold air with a warm shade
Of unentangled intermixture, made
By Love, of light and motion: one intense
Diffusion, one serene Omnipresence,
Whose flowing outlines mingle in their flowing
Around her cheeks and utmost fingers glowing
With the unintermitted blood, which there
Quivers (as in a fleece of snow-like air
The crimson pulse of living morning quiver),
Continuously prolong'd, and ending never,
Till they are lost, and in that Beauty furl'd
Which penetrates and clasps and fills the world;
Scarce visible from extreme loveliness.
Warm fragrance seems to fall from her light dress,
And her loose hair; and where some heavy tress
The air of her own speed has disentwined,
The sweetness seems to satiate the faint wind;
And in the soul a wild odour is felt,
Beyond the sense, like fiery dews that melt
Into the bosom of a frozen bud.——
See where she stands! a mortal shape endued
With love and life, and light and deity,

And motion which may change but cannot die;
An image of some bright Eternity;
A shadow of some golden dream; a Splendour
Leaving the third sphere pilotless; a tender
Reflection of the eternal Moon of Love,
Under whose motions life's dull billows move;
A Metaphor of Spring and Youth and Morning;
A Vision like incarnate April, warning,
With smiles and tears, Frost the Anatomy
Into his summer grave.

Ah, woe is me!
What have I dared? where am I lifted? how
Shall I descend, and perish not? I know
That Love makes all things equal: I have heard
By mine own heart this joyous truth averr'd:
The spirit of the worm beneath the sod,
In love and worship blends itself with God.

Spouse! Sister! Angel! Pilot of the Fate
Whose course has been so starless! O too late
Beloved! O too soon adored, by me!
For in the fields of immortality
My spirit should at first have worshipp'd thine,
A divine presence in a place divine;
Or should have moved beside it on this earth,
A shadow of that substance, from its birth;
But not as now:—I love thee; yes, I feel
That on the fountain of my heart a seal
Is set, to keep its waters pure and bright
For thee, since in those *tears* thou hast delight.
We—are we not form'd, as notes of music are,
For one another, though dissimilar;
Such difference without discord, as can make
Those sweetest sounds, in which all spirits shake
As trembling leaves in a continuous air?

Thy wisdom speaks in me, and bids me dare
Beacon the rocks on which high hearts are wreckt.
I never was attach'd to that great sect,
Whose doctrine is, that each one should select
Out of the crowd a mistress or a friend,
And all the rest, though fair and wise, commend
To cold oblivion, though it is in the code
Of modern morals, and the beaten road
Which those poor slaves with weary footsteps tread,
Who travel to their home among the dead
By the broad highway of the world, and so
With one chain'd friend, perhaps a jealous foe,
The dreariest and the longest journey go.

True Love in this differs from gold and clay,
That to divide is not to take away.
Love is like understanding, that grows bright,
Gazing on many truths; 't is like thy light,
Imagination! which from earth and sky,
And from the depths of human phantasy,
As from a thousand prisms and mirrors, fills
The Universe with glorious beams, and kills
Error, the worm, with many a sun-like arrow
Of its reverberated lightning. Narrow
The heart that loves, the brain that contemplates,
The life that wears, the spirit that creates
One object, and one form, and builds thereby
A sepulchre for its eternity.

Mind from its object differs most in this:
Evil from good; misery from happiness;
The baser from the nobler; the impure
And frail, from what is clear and must endure.
If you divide suffering and dross, you may
Diminish till it is consumed away;
If you divide pleasure and love and thought,
Each part exceeds the whole; and we know not
How much, while any yet remains unshared,
Of pleasure may be gain'd, of sorrow spared:
This truth is that deep well, whence sages draw
The unenvied light of hope; the eternal law
By which those live, to whom this world of life
Is as a garden ravaged, and whose strife
Tills for the promise of a later birth
The wilderness of this Elysian earth.

There was a Being whom my spirit oft
Met on its vision'd wanderings, far aloft,
In the clear golden prime of my youth's dawn,
Upon the fairy isles of sunny lawn,
Amid the enchanted mountains, and the caves
Of divine sleep, and on the air-like waves
Of wonder-level dream, whose tremulous floor
Paved her light steps;—on an imagined shore,
Under the grey beak of some promontory
She met me, robed in such exceeding glory,
That I beheld her not. In solitudes
Her voice came to me through the whispering woods,
And from the fountains, and the odours deep
Of flowers, which, like lips murmuring in their sleep
Of the sweet kisses which had lull'd them there,
Breathed but of *her* to the enamour'd air;
And from the breezes, whether low or loud,
And from the rain of every passing cloud,
And from the singing of the summer-birds,
And from all sounds, all silence. In the words
Of antique verse and high romance,—in form,
Sound, colour—in whatever checks that Storm
Which with the shatter'd present chokes the past;
And in that best philosophy, whose taste
Makes this cold common hell, our life, a doom
As glorious as a fiery martyrdom;
Her Spirit was the harmony of truth.—

Then, from the caverns of my dreamy youth
I sprang, as one sandall'd with plumes of fire,
And towards the loadstar of my one desire,
I flitted, like a dizzy moth, whose flight
Is as a dead leaf's in the owlet light,
When it would seek in Hesper's setting sphere
A radiant death, a fiery sepulchre,
As if it were a lamp of earthly flame.—
But She, whom prayers or tears then could not tame,
Past, like a God throned on a winged planet,
Whose burning plumes to tenfold swiftness fan it,
Into the dreary cone of our life's shade;
And as a man with mighty loss dismay'd,
I would have follow'd, though the grave between
Yawn'd like a gulf whose spectres are unseen:
When a voice said:—« O Thou of hearts the weakest,
The phantom is beside thee whom thou seekest.»
Then I—« where?» the world's echo answer'd « where!»
And in that silence, and in my despair,
I question'd every tongueless wind that flew
Over my tower of mourning, if it knew

Whither 't was fled, this soul out of my soul;
And murmur'd names and spells which have control
Over the sightless tyrants of our fate;
But neither prayer nor verse could dissipate
The night which closed on her; nor uncreate
That world within this Chaos, mine and me,
Of which she was the veil'd Divinity,
The world I say of thoughts that worshipp'd her:
And therefore I went forth, with hope and fear
And every gentle passion sick to death,
Feeding my course with expectation's breath,
Into the wintry forest of our life;
And struggling through its error with vain strife,
And stumbling in my weakness and my haste,
And half bewilder'd by new forms, I past
Seeking among those untaught foresters
If I could find one form resembling hers,
In which she might have mask'd herself from me.
There,—One, whose voice was venom'd melody
Sate by a well, under blue night-shade bowers;
The breath of her false mouth was like faint flowers,
Her touch was as electric poison,—flame
Out of her looks into my vitals came,
And from her living cheeks and bosom flew
A killing air, which pierced like honey-dew
Into the core of my green heart, and lay
Upon its leaves; until, as hair grown grey
O'er a young brow, they hid its unblown prime
With ruins of unseasonable time.

In many mortal forms I rashly sought
The shadow of that idol of my thought.
And some were fair—but beauty dies away:
Others were wise—but honey'd words betray:
And One was true—oh! why not true to me?
Then, as a hunted deer that could not flee,
I turn'd upon my thoughts, and stood at bay,
Wounded and weak and panting; the cold day
Trembled, for pity of my strife and pain.
When, like a noon-day dawn, there shone again
Deliverance. One stood on my path who seem'd
As like the glorious shape which I had dream'd,
As is the Moon, whose changes ever run
Into themselves, to the eternal Sun;
The cold chaste Moon, the Queen of Heaven's bright isles,
Who makes all beautiful on which she smiles.
That wandering shrine of soft yet icy flame,
Which ever is transform'd, yet still the same,
And warms not but illumines. Young and fair
As the descended Spirit of that sphere,
She hid me, as the Moon may hide the night
From its own darkness, until all was bright
Between the Heaven and Earth of my calm mind,
And, as a cloud charioted by the wind,
She led me to a cave in that wild place,
And sate beside me, with her downward face
Illumining my slumbers, like the Moon
Waxing and waning o'er Endymion.
And I was laid asleep, spirit and limb,
And all my being became bright or dim
As the Moon's image in a summer sea,
According as she smiled or frown'd on me;
And there I lay, within a chaste cold bed:
Alas, I then was nor alive nor dead:—
For at her silver voice came Death and Life,
Unmindful each of their accustom'd strife,
Mask'd like twin babes, a sister and a brother,
The wandering hopes of one abandon'd mother,
And through the cavern without wings they flew,
And cried «Away, he is not of our crew.»
I wept, and though it be a dream, I weep.

What storms then shook the ocean of my sleep,
Blotting that Moon, whose pale and waning lips
Then shrank as in the sickness of eclipse;—
And how my soul was as a lampless sea,
And who was then its Tempest; and when She,
The Planet of that hour, was quench'd, what frost
Crept o'er those waters, till from coast to coast
The moving billows of my being fell
Into a death of ice, immoveable;—
And then—what earthquakes made it gape and split,
The white Moon smiling all the while on it,
These words conceal:—If not, each word would be
The key of staunchless tears. Weep not for me!

At length, into the obscure Forest came
The Vision I had sought through grief and shame.
Athwart that wintry wilderness of thorns
Flash'd from her motion splendour like the Morn's,
And from her presence life was radiated
Through the grey earth and branches bare and dead;
So that her way was paved, and roof'd above,
With flowers as soft as thoughts of budding love;
And music from her respiration spread
Like light,—all other sounds were penetrated
By the small, still, sweet spirit of that sound,
So that the savage winds hung mute around;
And odours warm and fresh fell from her hair,
Dissolving the dull cold in the froze air:
Soft as an Incarnation of the Sun,
When light is changed to love, this glorious One
Floated into the cavern where I lay,
And call'd my Spirit, and the dreaming clay
Was lifted by the thing that dream'd below
As smoke by fire, and in her beauty's glow
I stood, and felt the dawn of my long night
Was penetrating me with living light:
I knew it was the Vision veil'd from me
So many years—that it was Emily.

Twin Spheres of light who rule this passive Earth,
This world of love, this *me;* and into birth
Awaken all its fruits and flowers, and dart
Magnetic might into its central heart;
And lift its billows and its mists, and guide
By everlasting laws, each wind and tide
To its fit cloud, and its appointed cave;
And lull its storms, each in the craggy grave
Which was its cradle, luring to faint bowers
The armies of the rainbow-winged showers;
And, as those married lights, which from the towers
Of Heaven look forth and fold the wandering globe
In liquid sleep and splendour, as a robe;
And all their many-mingled influence blend,
If equal, yet unlike, to one sweet end;—
So ye, bright regents, with alternate sway
Govern my sphere of being, night and day!
Thou, not disdaining even a borrow'd might;
Thou, not eclipsing a remoter light;
And, through the shadow of the seasons three,
From Spring to Autumn's sere maturity,

Light it into the Winter of the tomb,
Where it may ripen to a brighter bloom.
Thou too, O Comet beautiful and fierce!
Who drew the heart of this frail Universe
Towards thine own; till wreck'd in that convulsion,
Alternating attraction and repulsion,
Thine went astray and that was rent in twain;
Oh, float into our azure heaven again!
Be there love's folding-star at thy return;
The living Sun will feed thee from its urn
Of golden fire; the Moon will veil her horn
In thy last smiles; adoring Even and Morn
Will worship thee with incense of calm breath
And lights and shadows; as the star of Death
And Birth is worshipp'd by those sisters wild
Call'd Hope and Fear—upon the heart are piled
Their offerings,—of this sacrifice divine
A World shall be the altar.

Lady mine,
Scorn not these flowers of thought, the fading birth
Which from its heart of hearts that plant puts forth
Whose fruit, made perfect by thy sunny eyes,
Will be as of the trees of Paradise.

The day is come, and thou wilt fly with me.
To whatsoe'er of dull mortality
Is mine, remain a vestal sister still;
To the intense, the deep, the imperishable,
Not mine but me, henceforth be thou united
Even as a bride delighting and delighted.
The hour is come:—the destined Star has risen
Which shall descend upon a vacant prison.
The walls are high, the gates are strong, thick set
The sentinels——but true love never yet
Was thus constrain'd: it overleaps all fence:
Like lightning, with invisible violence
Piercing its continents; like Heaven's free breath,
Which he who grasps can hold not; liker Death,
Who rides upon a thought, and makes his way
Through temple, tower, and palace, and the array
Of arms: more strength has Love than he or they;
For it can burst his charnel, and make free
The limbs in chains, the heart in agony,
The soul in dust and chaos.

Emily,
A ship is floating in the harbour now,
A wind is hovering o'er the mountain's brow;
There is a path on the sea's azure floor,
No keel has ever plough'd that path before;
The halcyons brood around the foamless isles;
The treacherous Ocean has foresworn its wiles;
The merry mariners are bold and free:
Say, my heart's sister, wilt thou sail with me?
Our bark is as an albatross, whose nest
Is a far Eden of the purple East;
And we between her wings will sit, while Night
And Day, and Storm, and Calm, pursue their flight,
Our ministers, along the boundless Sea,
Treading each other's heels, unhecededly.
It is an isle under Ionian skies,
Beautiful as a wreck of Paradise,
And, for the harbours are not safe and good,
This land would have remain'd a solitude
But for some pastoral people native there,
Who from the Elysian, clear, and golden air
Draw the last spirit of the age of gold,
Simple and spirited; innocent and bold.
The blue Ægean girds this chosen home,
With ever-changing sound and light and foam,
Kissing the sifted sands, and caverns hoar;
And all the winds wandering along the shore
Undulate with the undulating tide:
There are thick woods where sylvan forms abide;
And many a fountain, rivulet, and pond,
As clear as elemental diamond,
Or serene morning air; and far beyond,
The mossy tracks made by the goats and deer
(Which the rough shepherd treads but once a year),
Pierce into glades, caverns, and bowers, and halls
Built round with ivy, which the waterfalls
Illumining, with sound that never fails,
Accompany the noon-day nightingales;
And all the place is peopled with sweet airs;
The light clear element which the isle wears
Is heavy with the scent of lemon-flowers,
Which floats like mist laden with unseen showers,
And falls upon the eye-lids like faint sleep;
And from the moss, violets and jonquils peep,
And dart their arrowy odour through the brain
Till you might faint with that delicious pain.
And every motion, odour, beam, and tone,
With that deep music is in unison:
Which is a soul within the soul—they seem
Like echoes of an ante-natal dream.—
It is an isle 'twixt Heaven, Air, Earth, and Sea,
Cradled, and hung in clear tranquillity;
Bright as that wandering Eden Lucifer,
Wash'd by the soft blue Oceans of young air.
It is a favour'd place. Famine or Blight,
Pestilence, War and Earthquake, never light
Upon its mountain-peaks; blind vultures, they
Sail onward far upon their fatal way:
The winged storms, chaunting their thunder-psalm
To other lands, leave azure chasms of calm
Over this isle, or weep themselves in dew,
From which its fields and woods ever renew
Their green and golden immortality.
And from the sea there rise, and from the sky
There fall, clear exhalations, soft and bright,
Veil after veil, each hiding some delight,
Which Sun or Moon or zephyr draw aside,
Till the isle's beauty, like a naked bride
Glowing at once with love and loveliness,
Blushes and trembles at its own excess:
Yet, like a buried lamp, a Soul no less
Burns in the heart of this delicious isle
An atom of th' Eternal, whose own smile
Unfolds itself, and may be felt, not seen,
O'er the grey rocks, blue waves, and forests green,
Filling their bare and void interstices.—
But the chief marvel of the wilderness
Is a lone dwelling, built by whom or how
None of the rustic island-people know:
'T is not a tower of strength, though with its height
It overtops the woods; but, for delight,
Some wise and tender Ocean-King, ere crime
Had been invented, in the world's young prime,
Rear'd it, a wonder of that simple time,

An envy of the isles, a pleasure-house
Made sacred to his sister and his spouse.
It scarce seems now a Wreck of human art,
But, as it were Titanic; in the heart
Of Earth having assumed its form, then grown
Out of the mountains, from the living stone,
Lifting itself in caverns light and high:
For all the antique and learned imagery
Has been erased, and in the place of it
The ivy and the wild-vine interknit
The volumes of their many twining stems;
Parasite flowers illume with dewy gems
The lampless halls, and when they fade, the sky
Peeps through their winter-woof of tracery
With Moon-light patches, or star atoms keen,
Or fragments of the day's intense serene;—
Working mosaic on their Parian floors.
And, day and night, aloof, from the high towers
And terraces, the Earth and Ocean seem
To sleep in one another's arms, and dream
Of waves, flowers, clouds, woods, rocks, and all that we
Read in their smiles, and call reality.

This isle and house are mine, and I have vow'd
Thee to be lady of the solitude.—
And I have fitted up some chambers there,
Looking towards the golden Eastern air,
And level with the living winds, which flow
Like waves above the living waves below.—
I have sent books and music there, and all
Those instruments with which high spirits call
The future from its cradle, and the past
Out of its grave, and make the present last
In thoughts and joys which sleep, but cannot die,
Folded within their own eternity.
Our simple life wants little, and true taste
Hires not the pale drudge Luxury, to waste
The scene it would adorn; and therefore still,
Nature, with all her children, haunts the hill.
The ring-dove, in the embowering ivy, yet
Keeps up her love-lament, and the owls flit
Round the evening tower, and the young stars glance
Between the quick bats in their twilight dance;
The spotted deer bask in the fresh moon-light
Before our gate, and the slow, silent night
Is measured by the pants of their calm sleep.
Be this our home in life, and when years heap
Their wither'd hours, like leaves, on our decay,
Let us become the over-hanging day,
The living soul of this Elysian isle,
Conscious, inseparable, one. Meanwhile
We two will rise, and sit, and walk together,
Under the roof of blue Ionian weather,
And wander in the meadows, or ascend
The mossy mountains, where the blue heavens bend
With lightest winds, to touch their paramour;
Or linger, where the pebble-paven shore,
Under the quick, faint kisses of the sea,
Trembles and sparkles as with ecstacy,—
Possessing and possest by all that is
Within that calm circumference of bliss,
And by each other, till to love and live
Be one:—or, at the noontide hour, arrive
Where some old cavern hoar seems yet to keep
The moonlight of the expired night asleep,
Through which the awaken'd day can never peep;
A veil for our seclusion, close as Night's,
Where secure sleep may kill thine innocent lights;
Sleep, the fresh dew of languid love, the rain
Whose drops quench kisses till they burn again.
And we will talk, until thought's melody
Become too sweet for utterance, and it die
In words, to live again in looks, which dart
With thrilling tone into the voiceless heart,
Harmonizing silence without a sound.
Our breath shall intermix, our bosoms bound,
And our veins beat together; and our lips,
With other eloquence than words, eclipse
The soul that burns between them; and the wells
Which boil under our being's inmost cells,
The fountains of our deepest life, shall be
Confused in passion's golden purity,
As mountain-springs under the morning Sun.
We shall become the same, we shall be one
Spirit within two frames, oh! wherefore two?
One passion in twin-hearts, which grows and grew,
Till, like two meteors of expanding flame,
Those spheres instinct with it become the same,
Touch, mingle, are transfigured; ever still
Burning, yet ever inconsumable:
In one another's substance finding food,
Like flames too pure and light and unimbued
To nourish their bright lives with baser prey,
Which point to Heaven and cannot pass away:
One hope within two wills, one will beneath
Two overshadowing minds, one life, one death,
One Heaven, one Hell, one immortality,
And one annihilation. Woe is me!
The winged words on which my soul would pierce
Into the height of love's rare Universe,
Are chains of lead around its flight of fire.—
I pant, I sink, I tremble, I expire!

Weak verses, go, kneel at your Sovereign's feet,
And say:—"We are the masters of thy slave;
What wouldest thou with us and ours and thine?"
Then call your sisters from Oblivion's cave,
All singing loud: "Love's very pain is sweet,
But its reward is in the world divine
Which, if not here, it builds beyond the grave."
So shall ye live when I am there. Then haste
Over the hearts of men, until ye meet
Marina, Vanna, Primus, and the rest,
And bid them love each other and be blest:
And leave the troop which errs, and which reproves,
And come and be my guest,—for I am Love's.

Hellas;

A LYRICAL DRAMA.

ΜΑΝΤΣ ΕΙΜ' ΕΣΘΛΩΝ ΑΓΩΝΩΝ.
ΟΕDIP. *Colon.*

TO HIS EXCELLENCY PRINCE ALEXANDER MAVROCORDATO,
LATE SECRETARY FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS TO THE HOSPODAR OF WALLACHIA,
THE DRAMA OF HELLAS
IS INSCRIBED AS AN IMPERFECT TOKEN OF THE ADMIRATION, SYMPATHY, AND FRIENDSHIP OF
PISA, *November* 1, 1821. THE AUTHOR

PREFACE.

THE poem of Hellas, written at the suggestion of the events of the moment, is a mere improvise, and derives its interest (should it be found to possess any) solely from the intense sympathy which the Author feels with the cause he would celebrate.

The subject in its present state is insusceptible of being treated otherwise than lyrically, and if I have called this poem a drama from the circumstance of its being composed in dialogue, the licence is not greater than that which has been assumed by other poets, who have called their productions epics, only because they have been divided into twelve or twenty-four books.

The Persæ of Æschylus afforded me the first model of my conception, although the decision of the glorious contest now waging in Greece being yet suspended, forbids a catastrophe parallel to the return of Xerxes and the desolation of the Persians. I have, therefore, contented myself with exhibiting a series of lyric pictures, and with having wrought upon the curtain of futurity, which falls upon the unfinished scene, such figures of indistinct and visionary delineation as suggest the final triumph of the Greek cause as a portion of the cause of civilization and social improvement.

The drama (if drama it must be called) is, however, so inartificial that I doubt whether, if recited on the Thespian waggon to an Athenian village at the Dionysiaca, it would have obtained the prize of the goat. I shall bear with equanimity any punishment greater than the loss of such a reward which the Aristarchi of the hour may think fit to inflict.

The only goat-song which I have yet attempted has, I confess, in spite of the unfavourable nature of the subject, received a greater and a more valuable portion of applause than I expected, or than it deserved.

Common fame is the only authority which I can allege for the details which form the basis of the poem, and I must trespass upon the forgiveness of my readers for the display of newspaper erudition to which I have been reduced. Undoubtedly, until the conclusion of the war, it will be impossible to obtain an account of it sufficiently authentic for historical materials; but poets have their privilege, and it is unquestionable that actions of the most exalted courage have been performed by the Greeks—that they have gained more than one naval victory, and that their defeat in Wallachia was signalized by circumstances of heroism more glorious even than victory.

The apathy of the rulers of the civilized world, to the astonishing circumstance of the descendants of that nation to which they owe their civilization—rising as it were from the ashes of their ruin, is something perfectly inexplicable to a mere spectator of the shows of this mortal scene. We are all Greeks. Our laws, our literature, our religion, our arts, have their root in Greece. But for Greece—Rome the instructor, the conqueror, or the metropolis of our ancestors, would have spread no illumination with her arms, and we might still have been savages and idolaters; or, what is worse, might have arrived at such a stagnant and miserable state of social institution as China and Japan possess.

The human form and the human mind attained to a perfection in Greece which has impressed its image on those faultless productions whose very fragments are the despair of modern art, and has propagated impulses which cannot cease, through a thousand channels of manifest or imperceptible operation, to ennoble and delight mankind until the extinction of the race.

The modern Greek is the descendant of those glorious beings whom the imagination almost refuses to figure to itself as belonging to our kind; and he inherits much of their sensibility, their rapidity of conception, their enthusiasm, and their courage. If in many instances he is degraded by moral and political slavery to the practice of the basest vices it engenders, and that below the level of ordinary degradation; let us reflect that the corruption of the best produces the worst, and that habits which subsist only in relation to a peculiar state of social institution may be expected to cease, as soon as that relation is dissolved. In fact, the Greeks, since the admirable novel of « Anastatius» could have been a faithful picture of their manners, have undergone most important changes; the flower of their youth, returning to their country from the universities of Italy, Germany and France, have communicated to their fellow-citizens the latest results of that social perfection of which their ancestors were the original source. The university of Chios contained before the breaking out

of the revolution eight hundred students, and among them several Germans and Americans. The munificence and energy of many of the Greek Princes and merchants, directed to the renovation of their country with a spirit and a wisdom which has few examples, is above all praise.

The English permit their own oppressors to act according to their natural sympathy with the Turkish tyrant, and to brand upon their name the indelible blot of an alliance with the enemies of domestic happiness, of Christianity and civilization.

Russia desires to possess, not to liberate Greece; and is contented to see the Turks, its natural enemies, and the Greeks, its intended slaves, enfeeble each other, until one or both fall into its net. The wise and generous policy of England would have consisted in establishing the independence of Greece and in maintaining it both against Russia and the Turk;—but when was the oppressor generous or just?

The Spanish Peninsula is already free. France is tranquil in the enjoyment of a partial exemption, from the abuses which its unnatural and feeble government are vainly attempting to revive. The seed of blood and misery has been sown in Italy, and a more vigorous race is arising to go forth to the harvest. The world waits only the news of a revolution of Germany, to see the tyrants who have pinnacled themselves on its supineness precipitated into the ruin from which they shall never arise. Well do these destroyers of mankind know their enemy, when they impute the insurrection in Greece to the same spirit before which they tremble throughout the rest of Europe; and that enemy well knows the power and cunning of its opponents, and watches the moment of their approaching weakness and inevitable division, to wrest the bloody sceptres from their grasp.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MAHMUD.
HASSAN.
DAOOD.
AHASUERUS, *a Jew.*
CHORUS *of Greek captive Women.*
Messengers, Slaves, and Attendants.

SCENE,—*Constantinople.*
TIME,—*Sunset.*

HELLAS.

SCENE, *a Terrace on the Seraglio.*

MAHMUD (*sleeping*), *an Indian Slave sitting beside his Couch.*

CHORUS OF GREEK CAPTIVE WOMEN.

We strew these opiate flowers
On thy restless pillow,—
They were stript from Orient bowers,
By the Indian billow.
Be thy sleep
Calm and deep,
Like theirs who fell—not ours who weep!

INDIAN.

Away, unlovely dreams!
Away, false shapes of sleep:
Be his, as heaven seems,
Clear, bright and deep!
Soft as love and calm as death,
Sweet as a summer-night without a breath.

CHORUS.

Sleep, sleep! our song is laden
With the soul of slumber;
It was sung by a Samian maiden,
Whose lover was of the number
Who now keep
That calm sleep
Whence none may wake, where none shall weep.

INDIAN.

I touch thy temples pale!
I breathe my soul on thee!
And could my prayers avail,
All my joy should be
Dead, and I would live to weep,
So thou mightst win one hour of quiet sleep.

CHORUS.

Breathe low, low,
The spell of the mighty mistress now!
When conscience lulls her sated snake,
And Tyrants sleep, let Freedom wake.
Breathe low, low,
The words which, like secret fire, shall flow
Through the veins of the frozen earth—low low!

SEMICHORUS I.

Life may change, but it may fly not;
Hope may vanish, but can die not;
Truth be veiled, but still it burneth;
Love repulsed,—but it returneth!

SEMICHORUS II.

Yet were life a charnel, where
Hope lay coffin'd with despair;
Yet were truth a sacred lie,
Love were lust—

SEMICHORUS I.

If Liberty
Lent not life its soul of light,
Hope its iris of delight,
Truth its prophet's robe to wear,
Love its power to give and bear.

CHORUS.

In the great morning of the world,
The spirit of God with might unfurl'd
The flag of Freedom over Chaos,
And all its banded anarchs fled,
Like vultures frighted from Imaus,
Before an earthquake's tread—
So from Time's tempestuous dawn
Freedom's splendour burst and shone:—
Thermopylæ and Marathon
Caught, like mountains beacon-lighted,
The springing fire.—The winged glory
On Philippi half-alighted,
Like an eagle on a promontory.

Its unwearied wings could fan
The quenchless ashes of Milan.[1]
From age to age, from man to man
It lived; and lit from land to land
Florence, Albion, Switzerland:
Then night fell; and as from night
Re-assuming fiery flight,
From the West swift Freedom came,
Against the course of heaven and doom
A second sun array'd in flame;
To burn, to kindle, to illume,
From far Atlantis its young beams
Chased the shadows and the dreams.
France, with all her sanguine steams,
Hid, but quench'd it not; again
Through clouds its shafts of glory rain
From utmost Germany to Spain.
As an eagle fed with morning
Scorns the embattled tempest's warning,
When she seeks her aery hanging
In the mountain cedar's hair,
And her brood expect the clanging
Of her wings through the wild air,
Sick with famine—Freedom so
To what of Greece remaineth now
Returns; her hoary ruins glow
Like orient mountains lost in day;
Beneath the safety of her wings
Her renovated nurselings play,
And in the naked lightnings
Of truth they purge their dazzled eyes.
Let Freedom leave, where'er she flies,
A desert, or a Paradise;
Let the beautiful and the brave
Share her glory, or a grave.

SEMICHORUS I.

With the gifts of gladness
Greece did thy cradle strew.

SEMICHORUS II.

With the tears of sadness
Greece did thy shroud bedew.

SEMICHORUS I.

With an orphan's affection
She follow'd thy bier through time;

SEMICHORUS II.

And at thy resurrection
Re-appeareth, like thou, sublime!

SEMICHORUS I.

If Heaven should resume thee,
To Heaven shall her spirit ascend;

SEMICHORUS II.

If Hell should entomb thee;
To Hell shall her high hearts bend.

SEMICHORUS I.

If Annihilation—

SEMICHORUS II.

Dust let her glories be;
And a name, and a nation
Be forgotten, Freedom, with thee!

INDIAN.

His brow grows darker—breathe not—move not!
He starts—he shudders;—ye that love not,
With your panting loud and fast
Have awaken'd him at last.

MAHMUD (*starting from his sleep*).

Man the Seraglio-guard! make fast the gate.
What! from a cannonade of three short hours?
'T is false! that breach towards the Bosphorus
Cannot be practicable yet—Who stirs?
Stand to the match; that when the foe prevails,
One spark may mix in reconciling ruin
The conqueror and the conquer'd! Heave the tower
Into the gap—wrench off the roof.

Enter HASSAN.

Ha! what!
The truth of day lightens upon my dream,
And I am Mahmud still.

HASSAN.

Your Sublime Highness
Is strangely moved.

MAHMUD.

The times do cast strange shadows
On those who watch and who must rule their course,
Lest they, being first in peril as in glory,
Be whelm'd in the fierce ebb:—and these are of them.
Thrice has a gloomy vision haunted me
As thus from sleep into the troubled day;
It shakes me as the tempest shakes the sea,
Leaving no figure upon memory's glass.
Would that—no matter. Thou didst say thou knewest
A Jew, whose spirit is a chronicle
Of strange and secret and forgotten things.
I bade thee summon him:—'t is said his tribe
Dream, and are wise interpreters of dreams.

HASSAN.

The Jew of whom I spake is old,—so old
He seems to have outlived a world's decay;
The hoary mountains and the wrinkled ocean
Seem younger still than he;—his hair and beard
Are whiter than the tempest-sifted snow;
His cold pale limbs and pulseless arteries
Are like the fibres of a cloud instinct
With light, and to the soul that quickens them
Are as the atoms of the mountain-drift
To the winter wind:—but from his eye looks forth
A life of unconsumed thought, which pierces
The present, and the past, and the to-come.
Some say that this is he whom the great prophet
Jesus, the son of Joseph, for his mockery
Mock'd with the curse of immortality.
Some feign that he is Enoch; others dream
He was pre-adamite, and has survived
Cycles of generation and of ruin.
The sage, in truth, by dreadful abstinence
And conquering penance of the mutinous flesh,
Deep contemplation, and unwearied study,
In years outstretch'd beyond the date of man,
May have obtain'd to sovereignty and science

[1] Milan was the centre of the resistance of the Lombard league against the Austrian tyrant. Frederic Barbarossa burnt the city to the ground, but liberty lived in its ashes, and it rose like an exhalation from its ruin.—See SISMONDI's "*Histoires des Républiques Italiennes*," a book which has done much towards awakening the Italians to an imitation of their great ancestors.

Over those strong and secret things and thoughts
Which others fear and know not.

MAHMUD.

I would talk
With this old Jew.

HASSAN.

Thy will is even now
Made known to him, where he dwells in a sea-cavern
'Mid the Demonesi, less accessible
Than thou or God! He who would question him
Must sail alone at sun-set, where the stream
Of ocean sleeps around those foamless isles
When the young moon is westering as now,
And evening airs wander upon the wave;
And when the pines of that bee-pasturing isle,
Green Erebinthus, quench the fiery shadow
Of his gilt prow within the sapphire water;
Then must the lonely helmsman cry aloud,
Ahasuerus! and the caverns round
Will answer, Ahasuerus! If his prayer
Be granted, a faint meteor will arise,
Lighting him over Marmora, and a wind
Will rush out of the sighing pine-forest,
And with the wind a storm of harmony
Unutterably sweet, and pilot him
Through the soft twilight to the Bosphorus:
Thence, at the hour and place and circumstance
Fit for the matter of their conference,
The Jew appears. Few dare, and few who dare,
Win the desired communion—but that shout
Bodes—— [*A shout without.*

MAHMUD.

Evil, doubtless; like all human sounds.
Let me converse with spirits.

HASSAN.

That shout again.

MAHMUD.

This Jew whom thou hast summon'd—

HASSAN.

Will be here—

MAHMUD.

When the omnipotent hour, to which are yoked
He, I, and all things, shall compel—enough.
Silence those mutineers—that drunken crew
That crowd about the pilot in the storm.
Ay! strike the foremost shorter by a head!
They weary me, and I have need of rest.
Kings are like stars—they rise and set, they have
The worship of the world, but no repose.
[*Exeunt severally.*

CHORUS.[1]

Worlds on worlds are rolling ever
From creation to decay,
Like the bubbles on a river,
Sparkling, bursting, borne away;
But they are still immortal
Who, through birth's orient portal,
And Death's dark chasm hurrying to and fro,
Clothe their unceasing flight
In the brief dust and light
Gather'd around their chariots as they go;
New shapes they still may weave,
New Gods, new laws receive;
Bright or dim are they, as the robes they last
On Death's bare ribs had cast.

A power from the unknown God;
A Promethean conqueror came;
Like a triumphal path he trod
The thorns of death and shame.
A mortal shape to him
Was like the vapour dim
Which the orient planet animates with light;
Hell, Sin and Slavery came,
Like blood-hounds mild and tame,
Nor prey'd until their lord had taken flight.
The moon of Mahomet
Arose, and it shall set:
While blazon'd as on heaven's immortal noon
The cross leads generations on.

Swift as the radiant shapes of sleep
From one whose dreams are paradise,
Fly when the fond wretch wakes to weep,
And day peers forth with her blank eyes!
So fleet, so faint, so fair,
The powers of earth and air
Fled from the folding star of Bethlehem:
Apollo, Pan, and Love,
And even Olympian Jove
Grew weak, for killing Truth had glared on them.
Our hills, and seas, and streams,
Dispeopled of their dreams,
Their waters turn'd to blood, their dew to tears,
Wail'd for the golden years.

Enter MAHMUD, HASSAN, DAOOD, *and others.*

MAHMUD.

More gold? our ancestors bought gold with victory,
And shall I sell it for defeat?

DAOOD.

The Janizars
Clamour for pay.

MAHMUD.

Go! bid them pay themselves
With Christian blood! Are there no Grecian virgins

[1] The popular notions of Christianity are represented in this chorus as true in their relation to the worship they superseded, and that which in all probability they will supersede, without considering their merits in a relation more universal. The first stanza contrasts the immortality of the living and thinking beings which inhabit the planets, and, to use a common and inadequate phrase, clothe themselves in matter, with the transience of the noblest manifestations of the external world.

The concluding verses indicate a progressive state of more or less exalted existence, according to the degree of perfection which every distinct intelligence may have attained. Let it not be supposed that I mean to dogmatize upon a subject concerning which all men are equally ignorant, or that I think the Gordian knot of the origin of evil can be disentangled by that or any similar assertions. The received hypothesis of a Being resembling men in the moral attributes of his nature, having called us out of non-existence, and after inflicting on us the misery of the commission of error, should superadd that of the punishment and the privations consequent upon it, still would remain inexplicable and incredible. That there is a true solution of the riddle, and that in our present state that solution is unattainable by us, are propositions which may be regarded as equally certain; meanwhile, as it is the province of the poet to attach himself to those ideas which exalt and ennoble humanity, let him be permitted to have conjectured the condition of that futurity towards which we are all impelled by an inextinguishable thirst for immortality. Until better arguments can be produced than sophisms which disgrace the cause, this desire itself must remain the strongest and the only presumption that eternity is the inheritance of every thinking being.

Whose shrieks and spasms and tears they may enjoy?
No infidel children to impale on spears?
No hoary priests after that patriarch[1]
Who bent the curse against his country's heart,
Which clove his own at last? Go! bid them kill:
Blood is the seed of gold.

DAOOD.

It has been sown,
And yet the harvest to the sickle-men
Is as a grain to each.

MAHMUD.

Then, take this signet:
Unlock the seventh chamber, in which lie
The treasures of victorious Solyman,
An empire's spoils stored for a day of ruin—
O spirit of my sires! is it not come?
The prey-birds and the wolves are gorged and sleep,
But these, who spread their feast on the red earth,
Hunger for gold, which fills not.—See them fed;
Then lead them to the rivers of fresh death.

[*Exit* DAOOD.

Oh! miserable dawn, after a night
More glorious than the day which it usurp'd!
O, faith in God! O, power on earth! O, word
Of the great Prophet, whose overshadowing wings
Darken'd the thrones and idols of the west,
Now bright!—For thy sake cursed be the hour,
Even as a father by an evil child,
When the orient moon of Islam roll'd in triumph
From Caucasus to white Ceraunia!
Ruin above, and anarchy below;
Terror without, and treachery within;
The chalice of destruction full, and all
Thirsting to drink; and who among us dares
To dash it from his lips? and where is Hope?

HASSAN.

The lamp of our dominion still rides high;
One God is God—Mahomet is his Prophet.
Four hundred thousand Moslems, from the limits
Of utmost Asia irresistibly
Throng, like full clouds at the Sirocco's cry,
But not like them to weep their strength in tears;
They have destroying lightning, and their step
Wakes earthquake, to consume and overwhelm,
And reign in ruin. Phrygian Olympus,
Tymolus, and Latmos, and Mycale, roughen
With horrent arms, and lofty ships, even now,
Like vapours anchor'd to a mountain's edge,
Freighted with fire and whirlwind, wait at Scala
The convoy of the ever-veering wind.
Samos is drunk with blood;—the Greek has paid
Brief victory with swift loss and long despair.
The false Moldavian serfs fled fast and far
When the fierce shout of Allah-illa-Allah!
Rose like the war-cry of the northern wind,
Which kills the sluggish clouds, and leaves a flock
Of wild swans struggling with the naked storm.
So were the lost Greeks on the Danube's day!

[1] The Greek Patriarch, after having been compelled to fulminate an anathema against the insurgents, was put to death by the Turks.

Fortunately the Greeks have been taught that they cannot buy security by degradation, and the Turks, though equally cruel, are less cunning than the smooth-faced tyrants of Europe.

As to the anathema, his Holiness might as well have thrown his mitre at Mount Athos for any effect that it produced. The chiefs of the Greeks are almost all men of comprehension and enlightened views on religion and politics.

If night is mute, yet the returning sun
Kindles the voices of the morning birds;
Nor at thy bidding less exultingly
Than birds rejoicing in the golden day,
The anarchies of Africa unleash
Their tempest-winged cities of the sea,
To speak in thunder to the rebel world.
Like sulphureous clouds half-shatter'd by the storm
They sweep the pale Ægean, while the Queen
Of Ocean, bound upon her island throne,
Far in the west sits mourning that her sons,
Who frown on Freedom, spare a smile for thee:
Russia still hovers, as an eagle might
Within a cloud, near which a kite and crane
Hang tangled in inextricable fight,
To stoop upon the victor;—for she fears
The name of Freedom, even as she hates thine;
But recreant Austria loves thee as the grave
Loves pestilence, and her slow dogs of war,
Flesh'd with the chace, come up from Italy,
And howl upon their limits; for they see
The panther Freedom fled to her old cover
Amid seas and mountains, and a mightier brood
Crouch around. What anarch wears a crown or mitre,
Or bears the sword, or grasps the key of gold,
Whose friends are not thy friends, whose foes thy foes?
Our arsenals and our armories are full;
Our forts defy assaults; ten thousand cannon
Lie ranged upon the beach, and hour by hour
Their earth-convulsing wheels affright the city;
The galloping of fiery steeds makes pale
The Christian merchant, and the yellow Jew
Hides his hoard deeper in the faithless earth.
Like clouds, and like the shadows of the clouds
Over the hills of Anatolia,
Swift in wide troops the Tartar chivalry
Sweep;—the far-flashing of their starry lances
Reverberates the dying light of day.
We have one God, one King, one Hope, one Law,
But many-headed Insurrection stands
Divided in itself, and soon must fall.

MAHMUD.

Proud words, when deeds come short, are seasonable:
Look, Hassan, on yon crescent moon, emblazon'd
Upon that shatter'd flag of fiery cloud
Which leads the rear of the departing day,
Wan emblem of an empire fading now!
See how it trembles in the blood-red air,
And like a mighty lamp whose oil is spent,
Shrinks on the horizon's edge, while, from above,
One star with insolent and victorious light
Hovers above its fall, and with keen beams,
Like arrows through a fainting antelope,
Strikes its weak form to death.

HASSAN.

Even as that moon,
Renews itself——

MAHMUD.

Shall we be not renew'd!
Far other bark than ours were needed now
To stem the torrent of descending time:
The spirit that lifts the slave before its lord
Stalks through the capitals of armed kings,
And spreads his ensign in the wilderness;
Exults in chains; and when the rebel falls,
Cries like the blood of Abel from the dust;

And the inheritors of earth, like beasts
When earthquake is unleash'd, with idiot fear
Cower in their kingly dens—as I do now.
What were Defeat, when Victory must appal?
Or Danger, when Security looks pale?
How said the messenger—who from the fort
Islanded in the Danube, saw the battle
Of Bucharest?—that—

HASSAN.

Ibrahim's scimitar
Drew with its gleam swift victory from heaven,
To burn before him in the night of battle—
A light and a destruction.

MAHMUD.

Ay! the day
Was ours; but how?—

HASSAN.

The light Wallachians,
The Arnaut, Servian, and Albanian allies,
Fled from the glance of our artillery
Almost before the thunder-stone alit;
One half the Grecian army made a bridge
Of safe and slow retreat, with Moslem dead;
The other—

MAHMUD.

Speak—tremble not—

HASSAN.

Islanded
By victor myriads, form'd in hollow square
With rough and stedfast front, and thrice flung back
The deluge of our foaming cavalry;
Thrice their keen wedge of battle pierced our lines.
Our baffled army trembled like one man
Before a host, and gave them space; but soon,
From the surrounding hills, the batteries blazed,
Kneading them down with fire and iron rain.
Yet none approach'd; till, like a field of corn
Under the hook of the swart sickle-man,
The bands intrench'd in mounds of Turkish dead
Grew weak and few.—Then said the Pacha, « Slaves,
Render yourselves!—They have abandon'd you—
What hope of refuge, or retreat, or aid?
We grant your lives.»—« Grant that which is thine own,»
Cried one, and fell upon his sword and died!
Another—« God, and man, and hope abandon me;
But I to them and to myself remain
Constant;»—he bow'd his head, and his heart burst.
A third exclaim'd, « There is a refuge, tyrant,
Where thou darest not pursue, and canst not harm,
Shouldst thou pursue; there we shall meet again.»
Then held his breath, and, after a brief spasm,
The indignant spirit cast its mortal garment
Among the slain—dead earth upon the earth!
So these survivors, each by different ways,
Some strange, all sudden, none dishonourable,
Met in triumphant death; and when our army,
Closed in, while yet in wonder, and awe, and shame,
Held back the base hyenas of the battle
That feed upon the dead and fly the living,
One rose out of the chaos of the slain;
And if it were a corpse which some dread spirit
Of the old saviours of the land we rule
Had lifted in its anger, wandering by;
Or if there burn'd within the dying man
Unquenchable disdain of death, and faith
Creating what it feign'd;—I cannot tell,
But he cried, « Phantoms of the free, we come!
Armies of the eternal, ye who strike
To dust the citadels of sanguine kings,
And shake the souls throned on their stony hearts,
And thaw their frost-work diadems like dew!—
O ye who float around this clime, and weave
The garment of the glory which it wears,
Whose fame, though earth betray the dust it clasp'd,
Lies sepulchred in monumental thought!
Progenitors of all that yet is great,
Ascribe to your bright senate, O accept
In your high ministrations, us, your sons—
Us first, and the more glorious yet to come!
And ye, weak conquerors! giants who look pale
When the crush'd worm rebels beneath your tread—
The vultures, and the dogs, your pensioners tame,
Are overgorged; but, like oppressors, still
They crave the relic of destruction's feast.
The exhalations and the thirsty winds
Are sick with blood; the dew is foul with death—
Heaven's light is quench'd in slaughter: Thus where'er
Upon your camps, cities, or towers, or fleets,
The obscene birds the reeking remnants cast
Of these dead limbs upon your streams and mountains,
Upon your fields, your gardens, and your house-tops,
Where'er the winds shall creep, or the clouds fly,
Or the dews fall, or the angry sun look down
With poison'd light—Famine, and Pestilence,
And Panic, shall wage war upon our side!
Nature from all her boundaries is moved
Against ye: Time has found ye light as foam.
The Earth rebels; and Good and Evil stake
Their empire o'er the unborn world of men
On this one east—but ere the die be thrown,
The renovated genius of our race,
Proud umpire of the impious game, descends
A seraph-winged Victory, bestriding
The tempest of the Omnipotence of God,
Which sweeps all things to their appointed doom,
And you to Oblivion!»—More he would have said,
But—

MAHMUD.

Died—as thou shouldst ere thy lips had painted
Their ruin in the hues of our success.
A rebel's crime, gilt with a rebel's tongue!
Your heart is Greek, Hassan.

HASSAN.

It may be so:
A spirit not my own wrench'd me within,
And I have spoken words I fear and hate;
Yet would I die for—

MAHMUD.

Live! O live! outlive
Me and this sinking empire:—but the fleet—

HASSAN.

Alas!

MAHMUD.

The fleet which, like a flock of clouds
Chased by the wind, flies the insurgent banner;
Our winged castles from their merchant ships!
Our myriads before their weak pirate bands!
Our arms before their chains! Our years of empire
Before their centuries of servile fear!
Death is awake! Repulsed on the waters,
They own no more the thunder-bearing banner

Of Mahmud; but like hounds of a base breed,
Gorge from a stranger's hand, and rend their master.

HASSAN.

Latmos, and Ampelos, and Phanae, saw
The wreck—

MAHMUD.

The caves of the Icarian isles
Hold each to the other in loud mockery,
And with the tongue as of a thousand echoes
First of the sea-convulsing fight—and then—
Thou darest to speak—senseless are the mountains;
Interpret thou their voice!

HASSAN.

My presence bore
A part in that day's shame. The Grecian fleet
Bore down at day-break from the North, and hung
As multitudinous on the ocean line
As cranes upon the cloudless Thracian wind.
Our squadron, convoying ten thousand men,
Was stretching towards Nauplia when the battle
Was kindled.—
First through the hail of our artillery
The agile Hydriote barks with press of sail
Dash'd:—ship to ship, cannon to cannon, man
To man were grappled in the embrace of war,
Inextricable but by death or victory.
The tempest of the raging fight convulsed
To its crystalline depths that stainless sea,
And shook heaven's roof of golden morning clouds
Poised on an hundred azure mountain-isles.
In the brief trances of the artillery,
One cry from the destroy'd and the destroyer
Rose, and a cloud of desolation wrapt
The unforeseen event, till the north wind
Sprung from the sea, lifting the heavy veil
Of battle-smoke—then victory—victory!
For, as we thought, three frigates from Algiers
Bore down from Naxos to our aid, but soon
The abhorr'd cross glimmer'd behind, before,
Among, around us; and that fatal sign
Dried with its beams the strength of Moslem hearts,
As the sun drinks the dew.—What more? We fled!
Our noonday path over the sanguine foam
Was beacon'd, and the glare struck the sun pale
By our consuming transports: the fierce light
Made all the shadows of our sails blood-red,
And every countenance blank. Some ships lay feeding
The ravening fire even to the water's level:
Some were blown up; some, settling heavily,
Sunk; and the shrieks of our companions died
Upon the wind, that bore us fast and far,
Even after they were dead. Nine thousand perish'd!
We met the vultures legion'd in the air,
Stemming the torrent of the tainted wind:
They, screaming from their cloudy mountain peak
Stoop'd through the sulphureous battle-smoke, and pereh'd
Each on the weltering carcase that we loved,
Like its ill angel or its damned soul.
Riding upon the bosom of the sea,
We saw the dog-fish hastening to their feast.
Joy waked the voiceless people of the sea,
And ravening famine left his ocean-cave
To dwell with war, with us, and with despair.
We met night three hours to the west of Patmos,
And with night, tempest—

MAHMUD

Cease!

Enter a MESSENGER.

MESSENGER.

Your Sublime Highness,
That Christian hound, the Muscovite ambassador,
Has left the city. If the rebel fleet
Had anchor'd in the port, had victory
Crown'd the Greek legions in the hippodrome,
Panic were tamer.—Obedience and mutiny,
Like giants in contention planet-struck,
Stand gazing on each other.—There is peace
In Stamboul.—

MAHMUD.

Is the grave not calmer still?
Its ruins shall be mine.

HASSAN.

Fear not the Russian;
The tiger leagues not with the stag at bay
Against the hunter.—Cunning, base, and cruel,
He crouches, watching till the spoil be won,
And must be paid for his reserve in blood.
After the war is fought, yield the sleek Russian
That which thou canst not keep, his deserved portion
Of blood, which shall not flow through streets and fields
Rivers and seas, like that which we may win,
But stagnate in the veins of Christian slaves!

Enter SECOND MESSENGER.

SECOND MESSENGER.

Nauplia, Tripolizzi, Mothon, Athens,
Navarin, Artas, Mowenbasia,
Corinth and Thebes are carried by assault;
And every Islamite who made his dogs
Fat with the flesh of Galilean slaves,
Pass'd at the edge of the sword: the lust of blood
Which made our warriors drunk, is queneh'd in death
But like a fiery plague breaks out anew,
In deeds which makes the Christian cause look pale
In its own light. The garrison of Patras
Has store but for ten days, nor is there hope
But from the Briton: at once slave and tyrant,
His wishes still are weaker than his fears;
Or he would sell what faith may yet remain
From the oaths broke in Genoa and in Norway:
And if you buy him not, your treasury
Is empty even of promises—his own coin.
The freeman of a western poet chief [1]
Holds Attica with seven thousand rebels,
And has beat back the Pacha of Negropont;
The aged Ali sits in Yanina,
A crownless metaphor of empire;
His name, that shadow of his wither'd might,
Holds our besieging army like a spell
In prey to famine, pest, and mutiny:
He, bastion'd in his citadel, looks forth
Joyless upon the sapphire lake that mirrors
The ruins of the city where he reign'd
Childless and sceptreless. The Greek has reap'd
The costly harvest his own blood matured,

[1] A Greek who had been Lord Byron's servant commanded the insurgents in Attica. This Greek, Lord Byron informs me, though a poet and an enthusiastic patriot, gave him rather the idea of a timid and unenterprising person. It appears that circumstances make men what they are, and that we all contain the germ of a degree of degradation or of greatness, whose connexion with our character is determined by events.

Not the sower, Ali—who has bought a truce
From Ypsilanti with ten camel loads
Of Indian gold.

Enter a THIRD MESSENGER.

MAHMUD.

What more?

THIRD MESSENGER.

The Christian tribes
Of Lebanon and the Syrian wilderness
Are in revolt;—Damascus, Hems, Aleppo,
Tremble;—the Arab menaces Medina;
The Ethiop has intrench'd himself in Sennaar,
And keeps the Egyptian rebel well employ'd:
Who denies homage, claims investiture
As price of tardy aid. Persia demands
The cities on the Tigris, and the Georgians
Refuse their living tribute. Crete and Cyprus,
Like mountain-twins that from each other's veins
Catch the volcano-fire and earthquake spasm,
Shake in the general fever. Through the city,
Like birds before a storm the santons shriek,
And propheeyings horrible and new
Are heard among the crowd; that sea of men
Sleeps on the wrecks it made, breathless and still.
A Dervise, learn'd in the koran, preaches
That it is written how the sins of Islam
Must raise up a destroyer even now.
The Greeks expect a Saviour from the west,[1]
Who shall not come, men say, in clouds and glory,
But in the omnipresence of that spirit
In which all live and are. Ominous signs
Are blazon'd broadly on the noon-day sky;
One saw a red cross stamp'd upon the sun;
It has rain'd blood; and monstrous births declare
The secret wrath of Nature and her Lord.
The army encamp'd upon the Cydaris
Was roused last night by the alarm of battle,
And saw two hosts conflicting in the air,—
The shadows doubtless of the unborn time,
Cast on the mirror of the night. While yet
The fight hung balanced, there arose a storm
Which swept the phantoms from among the stars.
At the third watch the spirit of the plague
Was heard abroad flapping among the tents:
Those who relieved watch found the sentinels dead.
The last news from the camp is, that a thousand
Have sicken'd, and—

Enter a FOURTH MESSENGER.

MAHMUD.

And thou, pale ghost, dim shadow
Of some untimely rumour, speak!

FOURTH MESSENGER.

One comes
Fainting with toil, cover'd with foam and blood;
He stood, he says, upon Clelonites
Promontory, which o'erlooks the isles that groan
Under the Briton's frown, and all their waters
Then trembling in the splendour of the moon,
When as the wandering clouds unveil'd or hid
Her boundless light, he saw two adverse fleets
Stalk through the night in the horizon's glimmer,
Mingling fierce thunders and sulphureous gleams,
And smoke which strangled every infant wind
That soothed the silver clouds through the deep air.
At length the battle slept, but the Sirocco
Awoke, and drove his flock of thunder-clouds
Over the sea-horizon, blotting out
All objects—save that in the faint moon-glimpse
He saw, or dream'd he saw the Turkish admiral
And two the loftiest of our ships of war,
With the bright image of that queen of heaven,
Who hid, perhaps, her face for grief, reversed;
And the abhorred cross—

Enter an ATTENDANT.

ATTENDANT.

Your Sublime Highness,
The Jew, who——

MAHMOUD.

Could not come more seasonably:
Bid him attend. I'll hear no more! too long
We gaze on danger through the mist of fear,
And multiply upon our shatter'd hopes
The images of ruin. Come what will!
To-morrow and to-morrow are as lamps
Set in our path to light us to the edge
Through rough and smooth; nor can we suffer aught
Which he inflicts not in whose hand we are. [*Exeunt.*

SEMICHORUS I.

Would I were the winged cloud
Of a tempest swift and loud!
I would scorn
The smile of morn,
And the wave where the moon-rise is born!
I would leave
The spirits of eve
A shroud for the corpse of the day to weave
From others' threads than mine!
Bask in the blue noon divine
Who would, not I.

SEMICHORUS II.

Whither to fly?

SEMICHORUS I.

Where the rocks that gird the Ægean
Echo to the battle pæan
Of the free—
I would flee
A tempestuous herald of victory!
My golden rain
For the Grecian slain
Should mingle in tears with the bloody main;
And my solemn thunder-knell
Should ring to the world the passing-bell
Of tyranny!

SEMICHORUS II.

Ah king! wilt thou chain
The rack and the rain?
Wilt thou fetter the lightning and hurricane?
The storms are free,
But we——

CHORUS.

O Slavery! thou frost of the world's prime,
Killing its flowers and leaving its thorns bare!
Thy touch has stamp'd these limbs with crime,
These brows thy branding garland bear;
But the free heart, the impassive soul,
Scorn thy control!

[1] It is reported that this Messiah had arrived at a sea-port near Lacedaemon in an American brig. The association of names and ideas is irresistibly ludicrous, but the prevalence of such a rumour strongly marks the state of popular enthusiasm in Greece.

SEMICHORUS I.

Let there be light! said Liberty;
And like sunrise from the sea,
Athens arose!—Around her born,
Shone, like mountains in the morn,
Glorious states;—and are they now
Ashes, wrecks, oblivion?

SEMICHORUS II.

Go
Where Thermæ and Asopus swallow'd
Persia, as the sand does foam,
Deluge upon deluge follow'd,
Discord, Macedon, and Rome:
And, lastly, thou!

SEMICHORUS I.

Temples and towers,
Citadels and marts, and they
Who live and die there, have been ours,
And may be thine, and must decay;
But Greece and her foundations are
Built below the tide of war,
Based on the crystalline sea
Of thought and its eternity;
Her citizens' imperial spirits
Rule the present from the past;
On all this world of men inherits
Their seal is set.

SEMICHORUS II.

Hear ye the blast,
Whose Orphic thunder thrilling calls
From ruin her Titanian walls?
Whose spirit shakes the sapless bones
Of Slavery? Argos, Corinth, Crete,
Hear, and from their mountain thrones
The dæmons and the nymphs repeat
The harmony.

SEMICHORUS I.

I hear! I hear!

SEMICHORUS II.

The world's eyeless charioteer,
Destiny, is hurrying by!
What faith is crush'd, what empire bleeds
Beneath her earthquake-footed steeds?
What eagle-winged victory sits
At her right hand? what shadow flits
Before? what splendour rolls behind?
Ruin and Renovation cry,
Who but we?

SEMICHORUS I.

I hear! I hear!
The hiss as of a rushing wind,
The roar as of an ocean foaming,
The thunder as of earthquake coming,
I hear! I hear!
The crash as of an empire falling,
The shrieks as of a people calling
Mercy! Mercy!—How they thrill!
Then a shout of « Kill! kill! kill!»
And then a small still voice, thus—

SEMICHORUS II.

For
Revenge and wrong bring forth their kind,
The foul cubs like their parents are,
Their den is in their guilty mind,
And Conscience feeds them with despair.

SEMICHORUS I.

In sacred Athens, near the fane
Of Wisdom, Pity's altar stood;
Serve not the unknown God in vain,
But pay that broken shrine again
Love for hate, and tears for blood.

Enter MAHMUD *and* AHASUERUS.

MAHMUD.

Thou art a man, thou sagest, even as we—

AHASUERUS.

No more!

MAHMUD.

But raised above thy fellow-men
By thought, as I by power.

AHASUERUS.

Thou sayest so.

MAHMUD.

Thou art an adept in the difficult lore
Of Greek and Frank philosophy; thou numberest
The flowers, and thou measurest the stars;
Thou severest element from element;
Thy spirit is present in the past, and sees
The birth of this old world through all its cycles
Of desolation and of loveliness;
And when man was not, and how man became
The monarch and the slave of this low sphere,
And all its narrow circles—it is much.
I honour thee, and would be what thou art
Were I not what I am; but the unborn hour,
Cradled in fear and hope, conflicting storms,
Who shall unveil? Nor thou, nor I, nor any
Mighty or wise. I apprehend not
What thou hast taught me, but I now perceive
That thou art no interpreter of dreams;
Thou dost not own that art, device, or God,
Can make the future present—let it come!
Moreover, thou disdainest us and ours:
Thou art as God, whom thou contemplatest.

AHASUERUS.

Disdain thee?—not the worm beneath my feet!
The Fathomless has care for meaner things
Than thou canst dream, and has made pride for those
Who would be what they may not, or would seem
That which they are not. Sultan! talk no more
Of thee and me, the future and the past;
But look on that which cannot change—the one
The unborn, and undying. Earth and ocean,
Space, and the isles of life or light that gem
The sapphire floods of interstellar air,
This firmament pavilion'd upon chaos,
With all its cressets of immortal fire,
Whose outwalls, bastion'd impregnably
Against the escape of boldest thoughts, repels them
As Calpe the Atlantic clouds—this whole
Of suns, and worlds, and men, and beasts, and flowers,
With all the silent or tempestuous workings
By which they have been, are, or cease to be,
Is but a vision;—all that it inherits
Are motes of a sick eye, bubbles and dreams;
Thought is its cradle and its grave, nor less
The future and the past are idle shadows
Of thought's eternal flight—they have no being;
Nought is but that it feels itself to be.

MAHMUD.

What meanest thou? thy words stream like a tempest
Of dazzling mist within my brain—they shake

The earth on which I stand, and hang like night
On Heaven above me. What can they avail?
They cast on all things, surest, brightest, best,
Doubt, insecurity, astonishment.

AHASUERUS.

Mistake me not! All is contain'd in each,
Dodona's forest to an acorn's cup,
Is that which has been or will be, to that
Which is—the absent to the present. Thought
Alone, and its quick elements, Will, Passion,
Reason, Imagination, cannot die;
They are what that which they regard appears,
The stuff whence mutability can weave
All that it hath dominion o'er,—worlds, worms,
Empires, and superstitions. What has thought
To do with time, or place, or circumstance?
Wouldst thou behold the future?—ask and have!
Knock and it shall be open'd—look, and lo!
The coming age is shadow'd on the past
As on a glass.

MAHMUD.

Wild, wilder thoughts convulse
My spirit—Did not Mahomet the Second
Win Stamboul?

AHASUERUS.

Thou wouldst ask that giant spirit
The written fortunes of thy house and faith.
Thou wouldst cite one out of the grave to tell
How what was born in blood must die.

MAHMUD.

Thy words
Have power on me! I see—

AHASUERUS.

What nearest thou?

MAHMUD.

A far whisper——
Terrible silence.

AHASUERUS.

What succeeds?

MAHMUD.

The sound [1]
As of the assault of an imperial city,
The hiss of inextinguishable fire,
The roar of giant cannon;—the earthquaking
Fall of vast bastions and precipitous towers,
The shock of crags shot from strange enginery,
The clash of wheels, and clang of armed hoofs,
And crash of brazen mail, as of the wreck
Of adamantine mountains—the mad blast
Of trumpets, and the neigh of raging steeds,
And shrieks of women whose thrill jars the blood,
And one sweet laugh, most horrible to hear,
As of a joyous infant waked and playing
With its dead mother's breast; and now more loud
The mingled battle-cry—ha! hear I not
Εν τουτῳ νικη. Allah, Illah, Allah!

AHASUERUS.

The sulphureous mist is raised—thou see'st—

MAHMUD.

A chasm,
As of two mountains, in the wall of Stamboul;
And in that ghastly breach the Islamites,
Like giants on the ruins of a world,
Stand in the light of sunrise. In the dust
Glimmers a kingless diadem, and one
Of regal port has cast himself beneath
The stream of war. Another, proudly clad
In golden arms, spurs a Tartarian barb
Into the gap, and with his iron mace
Directs the torrent of that tide of men,
And seems—he is—Mahomet.

AHASUERUS.

What thou seest
Is but the ghost of thy forgotten dream;
A dream itself, yet less, perhaps, than that
Thou call'st reality. Thou mayst behold
How cities, on which empire sleeps enthroned,
Bow their tower'd crests to mutability.
Poised by the flood, e'en on the height thou holdest,
Thou mayst now learn how the full tide of power
Ebbs to its depths.—Inheritor of glory,
Conceived in darkness, born in blood, and nourish'd
With tears and toil, thou seest the mortal throes
Of that whose birth was but the same. The Past
Now stands before thee like an Incarnation
Of the To-come; yet wouldst thou commune with
That portion of thyself which was ere thou
Didst start for this brief race whose crown is death;
Dissolve with that strong faith and fervent passion
Which call'd it from the uncreated deep,
Yon cloud of war, with its tempestuous phantoms
Of raging death; and draw with mighty will
The imperial shade hither. [*Exit* AHASUERUS.

MAHMUD.

Approach!

PHANTOM.

I come
Thence whither thou must go! The grave is fitter
To take the living, than give up the dead;
Yet has thy faith prevail'd, and I am here.
The heavy fragments of the power which fell
When I arose, like shapeless crags and clouds,
Hang round my throne on the abyss, and voices
Of strange lament soothe my supreme repose,
Wailing for glory never to return.—
A later empire nods in its decay;
The autumn of a greener faith is come,
And wolfish change, like winter, howls to strip
The foliage in which Fame, the eagle, built
Her aëry, while Dominion whelp'd below.
The storm is in its branches, and the frost
Is on its leaves, and the blank deep expects
Oblivion on oblivion, spoil on spoil,
Ruin on ruin: thou art slow, my son;
The anarchs of the world of darkness keep
A throne for thee, round which thine empire lies
Boundless and mute; and for thy subjects thou,
Like us, shall rule the ghosts of murder'd life,
The phantoms of the powers who rule thee now—
Mutinous passions, and conflicting fears,

[1] For the vision of Mahmud of the taking of Constantinople in 1445, see GIBBON'S *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, vol. xii, p. 223.

The manner of the invocation of the spirit of Mahomet the Second will be censured as overdrawn. I could easily have made the jew a regular conjuror, and the phantom an ordinary ghost. I have preferred to represent the jew as disclaiming all pretension, or even belief, in supernatural agency, and as tempting Mahmud to that state of mind in which ideas may be supposed to assume the force of sensations, through the confusion of thought with the objects of thought, and the excess of passion animating the creations of imagination.

It is a sort of natural magic, susceptible of being exercised in a degree by any one who should have made himself master of the secret associations of another's thoughts.

And hopes that sate themselves on dust and die!
Stript of their mortal strength, as thou of thine.
Islam must fall, but we will reign together,
Over its ruins in the world of death :—
And if the trunk be dry, yet shall the seed
Unfold itself even in the shape of that
Which gathers birth in its decay. Woe! woe!
To the weak people tangled in the grasp
Of its last spasms.

MAHMUD.

Spirit, woe to all!
Woe to the wrong'd and the avenger! Woe
To the destroyer, woe to the destroy'd!
Woe to the dupe, and woe to the deceiver!
Woe to the oppress'd, and woe to the oppressor!
Woe both to those that suffer and inflict;
Those who are born, and those who die! But say,
Imperial shadow of the thing I am,
When, how, by whom, Destruction must accomplish
Her consummation?

PHANTOM.

Ask the cold pale Hour,
Rich in reversion of impending death,
When he shall fall upon whose ripe grey hairs
Sit care, and sorrow, and infirmity—
The weight which crime, whose wings are plumed with years,
Leaves in his flight from ravaged heart to heart
Over the heads of men, under which burthen
They bow themselves unto the grave: fond wretch!
He leans upon his crutch, and talks of years
To come, and how in hours of youth renew'd
He will renew lost joys, and—

VOICE WITHOUT.

Victory! victory!

[*The phantom vanishes.*

MAHMUD.

What sound of the importunate earth has broken
My mighty trance?

VOICE WITHOUT.

Victory! victory!

MAHMUD.

Weak lightning before darkness! poor faint smile
Of dying Islam! Voice which art the response
Of hollow weakness! Do I wake and live?
Were there such things? or may the unquiet brain,
Vex'd by the wise mad talk of the old Jew,
Have shaped itself these shadows of its fear?
It matters not!—for nought we see or dream,
Possess, or lose, or grasp at, can be worth
More than it gives or teaches. Come what may,
The future must become the past, and I
As they were to whom once this present hour,
This gloomy crag of time to which I cling,
Seem'd an Elysian isle of peace and joy
Never to be attain'd.—I must rebuke
This drunkenness of triumph ere it die,
And dying, bring despair.—Victory!—poor slaves!

[*Exit* MAHMUD.

VOICE WITHOUT.

Shout in the jubilee of death! The Greeks
Are as a brood of lions in the net,
Round which the kingly hunters of the earth
Stand smiling. Anarchs, ye whose daily food
Are curses, groans, and gold, the fruit of death,
From Thule to the girdle of the world,
Come, feast! the board groans with the flesh of men—
The cup is foaming with a nation's blood,
Famine and thirst await:—eat, drink, and die!

SEMICHORUS I.

Victorious Wrong, with vulture scream,
Salutes the risen sun, pursues the flying day!
I saw her ghastly as a tyrant's dream,
Perch on the trembling pyramid of night,
Beneath which earth and all her realms pavilion'd lay
In visions of the dawning undelight.
Who shall impede her flight?
Who rob her of her prey?

VOICE WITHOUT.

Victory! victory! Russia's famish'd eagles
Dare not to prey beneath the crescent's light.
Impale the remnant of the Greeks! despoil!
Violate! make their flesh cheaper than dust!

SEMICHORUS II.

Thou voice which art
The herald of the ill in splendour hid!
Thou echo of the hollow heart
Of monarchy, bear me to thine abode
When desolation flashes o'er a world destroy'd.
Oh bear me to those isles of jagged cloud
Which float like mountains on the earthquakes,'mid
The momentary oceans of the lightning;
Or to some toppling promontory proud
Of solid tempest, whose black pyramid,
Riven, overhangs the founts intensely brightening
Of those dawn-tinted deluges of fire
Before their waves expire,
When heaven and earth are light, and only light
In the thunder-night!

VOICE WITHOUT.

Victory! Victory! Austria, Russia, England,
And that tame serpent, that poor shadow, France,
Cry peace, and that means death when monarchs speak!
Ho, there! bring torches, sharpen those red stakes!
These chains are light, fitter for slaves and poisoners
Than Greeks. Kill! plunder! burn! let none remain.

SEMICHORUS I.

Alas for Liberty!
If numbers, wealth, or unfulfilling years,
Or fate, can quell the free;
Alas for Virtue! when
Torments, or contumely, or the sneers
Of erring judging men
Can break the heart where it abides.
Alas! if Love, whose smile makes this obscure more splendid,
Can change, with its false times and tides,
Like hope and terror—
Alas for Love!
And Truth, who wanderest lone and unbefriended,
If thou canst veil thy lie-consuming mirror
Before the dazzled eyes of error.
Alas for thee! Image of the above.

SEMICHORUS II.

Repulse, with plumes from conquest torn,
Led the ten thousand from the limits of the morn
Through many an hostile Anarchy!
At length they wept aloud and cried, "The sea! the sea!"
Through exile, persecution, and despair,
Rome was, and young Atlantis shall become
The wonder, or the terror, or the tomb
Of all whose step wakes power lull'd in her savage lair:
But Greece was as a hermit child,

Whose fairest thoughts and limbs were built
To woman's growth by dreams so mild,
She knew not pain or guilt;
And now, O Victory, blush! and Empire, tremble,
When ye desert the free!
If Greece must be
A wreck, yet shall its fragments reassemble,
And build themselves again impregnably
In a diviner clime,
To Amphionic music, on some cape sublime,
Which frowns above the idle foam of Time.

SEMICHORUS I.

Let the tyrants rule the desert they have made;
Let the free possess the paradise they claim;
Be the fortune of our fierce oppressors weigh'd
With our ruin, our resistance, and our name!

SEMICHORUS II.

Our dead shall be the seed of their decay,
Our survivors be the shadows of their pride,
Our adversity a dream to pass away—
Their dishonour a remembrance to abide!

VOICE WITHOUT.

Victory! Victory! The bought Briton sends
The keys of ocean to the Islamite.
Nor shall the blazon of the cross be veil'd,
And British skill directing Othman might,
Thunder-strike rebel victory. O keep holy
This jubilee of unrevenged blood!
Kill! crush! despoil! Let not a Greek escape!

SEMICHORUS I.

Darkness has dawn'd in the East
On the noon of time:
The death-birds descend to their feast,
From the hungry clime.
Let Freedom and Peace flee far
To a sunnier strand,
And follow Love's folding star
To the evening land!

SEMICHORUS II.

The young moon has fed
Her exhausted horn
With the sunset's fire:
The weak day is dead,
But the night is not born;
And, like loveliness panting with wild desire,
While it trembles with fear and delight,
Hesperus flies from awakening might,
And pants in its beauty and speed with light
Fast-flashing, soft, and bright.
Thou beacon of love! thou lamp of the free!
Guide us far, far away,
To climes where now, veil'd by the ardour of day,
Thou art hidden
From waves on which weary Noon
Faints in her summer swoon,
Between kingless continents, sinless as Eden,
Around mountains and islands inviolably
Prankt on the sapphire sea.

SEMICHORUS I.

Through the sunset of hope,
Like the shapes of a dream,
What Paradise islands of glory gleam
Beneath Heaven's cope.
Their shadows more clear float by—
The sound of their oceans, the light of their sky,
The music and fragrance their solitudes breathe,
Burst like morning on dreams, or like Heaven on death,
Through the walls of our prison;
And Greece, which was dead, is arisen!

CHORUS.

The world's great age begins anew,[1]
The golden years return,
The earth doth like a snake renew
Her winter weeds outworn:
Heaven smiles, and faiths and empires gleam
Like wrecks of a dissolving dream.
A brighter Hellas rears its mountains
From waves serener far;
A new Peneus rolls its fountains
Against the morning-star.
Where fairer Tempes bloom, there sleep
Young Cyclads, on a sunnier deep;
A loftier Argos cleaves the main,
Fraught with a later prize;
Another Orpheus sings again,
And loves, and weeps, and dies.
A new Ulysses leaves once more
Calypso for his native shore.
O write no more the tale of Troy,
If earth Death's scroll must be!
Nor mix with Laian rage the joy
Which dawns upon the free:
Although a subtle sphinx renew
Riddles of death Thebes never knew,
Another Athens shall arise,
And to remoter time
Bequeath, like sunset to the skies,
The splendour of its prime;
And leave, if nought so bright may live,
All earth can take or heaven can give.
Saturn and Love their long repose[2]
Shall burst, more wise and good
Than all who fell, than one who rose,
Than many unwithstood—
Not gold, not blood, their altar dowers,
But native tears, and symbol flowers.
O cease! must hate and death return?
Cease! must men kill and die?
Cease! drain not to its dregs the urn
Of bitter prophecy.
The world is weary of the past—
O might it die or rest at last!

[1] The final chorus is indistinct and obscure as the event of the living drama whose arrival it foretells. Prophecies of wars, and rumour of wars, etc. may safely be made by poet or prophet in any age; but to anticipate, however darkly, a period of regeneration and happiness, is a more hazardous exercise of the faculty which bards possess or feign. I will remind the reader, «magno nec proximus intervallo,» of Isaiah and Virgil, whose ardent spirits overleaping the actual reign of evil which we endure and bewail, already saw the possible and perhaps approaching state of society in which the «lion shall lie down with the lamb,» and «omnis feret omnia tellus.» Let these great names be my authority and excuse.

[2] Saturn and Love were among the deities of a real or imaginary state of innocence and happiness. All those who fell, or the Gods of Greece, Asia and Egypt, and the many unsubdued, or the monstrous objects of the idolatry of China, India, the Antarctic islands, and the native tribes of America, certainly have reigned over the understandings of men in conjunction or in succession, during periods in which all we know of evil has been in a state of portentous, and, until the revival of learning and the arts, perpetually increasing activity. The Grecian Gods seem indeed to have been personally more innocent, although it cannot be said that, as far as temperance and chastity are concerned, they gave very edifying examples. The horrors of the Mexican, the Peruvian, and the Indian superstitions are well known.

Miscellaneous Poems.[1]

In nobil sangue vita umile e queta,
Ed in alto intelletto un puro core;
Frutto senile in sul giovenil fiore,
E in aspetto pensoso anima lieta.
PETRARCA.

JULIAN AND MADDALO;

A CONVERSATION.

The meadows with fresh streams, the bees with thyme,
The goats with the green leaves of budding spring,
Are saturated not—nor Love with tears.
VIRGIL'S *Gallus*.

COUNT MADDALO is a Venetian nobleman of ancient family and of great fortune, who, without mixing much in the society of his countrymen, resides chiefly at his magnificent palace in that city. He is a person of the most consummate genius; and capable, if he would direct his energies to such an end, of becoming the redeemer of his degraded country. But it is his weakness to be proud: he derives, from a comparison of his own extraordinary mind with the dwarfish intellects that surround him, an intense apprehension of the nothingness of human life. His passions and his powers are incomparably greater than those of other men, and instead of the latter having been employed in curbing the former, they have mutually lent each other strength. His ambition preys upon itself, for want of objects which it can consider worthy of exertion. I say that Maddalo is proud, because I can find no other word to express the concentered and impatient feelings which consume him; but it is on his own hopes and affections only that he seems to trample, for in social life no human being can be more gentle, patient, and unassuming than Maddalo. He is cheerful, frank, and witty. His more serious conversation is a sort of intoxication; men are held by it as by a spell. He has travelled much; and there is an inexpressible charm in his relation of his adventures in different countries.

Julian is an Englishman of good family, passionately attached to those philosophical notions which assert the power of man over his own mind, and the immense improvements of which, by the extinction of certain moral superstitions, human society may be yet susceptible. Without concealing the evil in the world, he is for ever speculating how good may be made superior. He is a complete infidel, and a scoffer at all things reputed holy; and Maddalo takes a wicked pleasure in drawing out his taunts against religion. What Maddalo thinks on these matters is not exactly known. Julian, in spite of his heterodox opinions, is conjectured by his friends to possess some good qualities. How far this is possible, the pious reader will determine. Julian is rather serious.

Of the Maniac I can give no information. He seems by his own account to have been disappointed in love. He was evidently a very cultivated and amiable person when in his right senses. His story, told at length, might be like many other stories of the same kind: the unconnected exclamations of his agony will perhaps be found a sufficient comment for the text of every heart.

I RODE one evening with Count Maddalo
Upon the bank of land which breaks the flow
Of Adria towards Venice: a bare strand
Of hillocks, heap'd from ever-shifting sand,
Matted with thistles and amphibious weeds,
Such as from earth's embrace the salt ooze breeds,
Is this; an uninhabited sea-side,
Which the lone fisher, when his nets are dried,
Abandons; and no other object breaks
The waste, but one dwarf-tree and some few stakes
Broken and unrepair'd, and the tide makes
A narrow space of level sand thereon,
Where 't was our wont to ride while day went down.
This ride was my delight. I love all waste
And solitary places; where we taste
The pleasure of believing what we see
Is boundless, as we wish our souls to be:
And such was this wide ocean, and this shore
More barren than its billows; and yet more
Than all, with a remember'd friend I love
To ride as then I rode;—for the winds drove
The living spray along the sunny air
Into our faces; the blue heavens were bare,
Stripp'd to their depths by the awakening north;
And, from the waves, sound like delight broke forth,
Harmonizing with solitude, and sent
Into our hearts aërial merriment.
So, as we rode, we talk'd; and the swift thought,
Winging itself with laughter, linger'd not,
But flew from brain to brain,—such glee was ours,
Charged with light memories of remember'd hours,
None slow enough for sadness: till we came
Homeward, which always makes the spirit tame.
This day had been cheerful but cold, and now
The sun was sinking, and the wind also.
Our talk grew somewhat serious, as may be
Talk interrupted with such raillery
As mocks itself, because it cannot scorn
The thoughts it would extinguish:—'t was forlorn,
Yet pleasing; such as once, so poets tell,
The devils held within the dales of hell,
Concerning God, free-will, and destiny.
Of all that Earth has been, or yet may be;
All that vain men imagine or believe,
Or hope can paint, or suffering can achieve,
We descanted; and I (for ever still
Is it not wise to make the best of ill?)
Argued against despondency; but pride
Made my companion take the darker side.
The sense that he was greater than his kind
Had struck, methinks, his eagle spirit blind
By gazing on its own exceeding light.
Meanwhile the sun paused ere it should alight
Over the horizon of the mountains—Oh!
How beautiful is sunset, when the glow
Of heaven descends upon a land like thee,
Thou paradise of exiles, Italy!
Thy mountains, seas, and vineyards, and the towers
Of cities they encircle!—It was ours
To stand on thee, beholding it: and then,
Just where we had dismounted, the Count's men

[1] The greater part of these pieces first appeared after their author's death, in a volume of POEMS, edited by Mrs Shelley, whose interesting Preface will be found entire in the biographical memoir prefixed to this edition.—EDITOR.

Were waiting for us with the gondola.
As those who pause on some delightful way,
Though bent on pleasant pilgrimage, we stood,
Looking upon the evening and the flood,
Which lay between the city and the shore,
Paved with the image of the sky: the hoar
And aery Alps, towards the north, appear'd,
Through mist, a heaven-sustaining bulwark, rear'd
Between the east and west; and half the sky
Was roof'd with clouds of rich emblazonry,
Dark purple at the zenith, which still grew
Down the steep west into a wondrous hue
Brighter than burning gold, even to the rent
Where the swift sun yet paused in his descent
Among the many folded hills—they were
Those famous Euganean hills, which bear,
As seen from Lido through the harbour piles,
The likeness of a clump of peaked isles—
And then, as if the earth and sea had been
Dissolved into one lake of fire, were seen
Those mountains towering, as from waves of flame,
Around the vaporous sun, from which there came
The inmost purple spirit of light, and made
Their very peaks transparent. « Ere it fade,»
Said my companion, « I will show you soon
A better station.» So, o'er the lagune
We glided; and from that funereal bark
I lean'd, and saw the city, and could mark
How from their many isles, in evening's gleam,
Its temples and its palaces did seem
Like fabrics of enchantment piled to heav'n.
I was about to speak, when—« We are even
Now at the point I meant,» said Maddalo,
And bade the gondolieri ccase to row.
« Look, Julian, on the west, and listen well
If you hear not a deep and heavy bell.»
I look'd, and saw between us and the sun
A building on an island, such an one
As age to age might add, for uses vile,—
A windowless, deform'd and dreary pile;
And on the top an open tower, where hung
A bell, which in the radiance sway'd and swung—
We could just hear its hoarse and iron tongue:
The broad sun sank behind it, and it toll'd
In strong and black relief.—« What we behold
Shall be the madhouse and its belfry tower;»—
Said Maddalo, « and even at this hour,
Those who may cross the water hear that bell,
Which calls the maniacs, each one from his cell,
To vespers.»—« As much skill as need to pray,
In thanks or hope for their dark lot, have they,
To their stern Maker,» I replied.—« O, ho!
You talk as in years past,» said Maddalo.
« 'T is strange men change not. You were ever still
Among Christ's flock a perilous infidel,
A wolf for the meek lambs: if you can't swim,
Beware of providence.» I look'd on him,
But the gay smile had faded from his eye.
« And such,» he cried, « is our mortality;
And this must be the emblem and the sign
Of what should be eternal and divine;
And like that black and dreary bell, the soul,
Hung in an heav'n-illumined tower, must toll
Our thoughts and our desires to meet below
Round the rent heart, and pray—as madmen do;
For what? they know not, till the night of death,
As sunset that strange vision, severeth
Our memory from itself, and us from all
We sought, and yet were baffled.» I recall
The sense of what he said, although I mar
The force of his expressions. The broad star
Of day meanwhile had sunk behind the hill;
And the black bell became invisible;
And the red tower look'd grey; and all between,
The churches, ships, and palaces, were seen
Huddled in gloom; into the purple sea
The orange hues of heaven sunk silently.
We hardly spoke, and soon the gondola
Convey'd me to my lodging by the way.

The following morn was rainy, cold and dim:
Ere Maddalo arose I call'd on him,
And whilst I waited, with his child I play'd;
A lovelier toy sweet Nature never made;
A serious, subtle, wild, yet gentle being;
Graceful without design, and unforeseeing;
With eyes—Oh! speak not of her eyes! which seem
Twin mirrors of Italian Heaven, yet gleam
With such deep meaning as we never see
But in the human countenance. With me
She was a special favourite: I had nursed
Her fine and feeble limbs, when she came first
To this bleak world; and she yet seem'd to know,
On second sight, her ancient playfellow,
Less changed than she was by six months or so.
For, after her first shyness was worn out,
We sate there, rolling billiard-balls about,
When the Count enter'd. Salutations past:
« The words you spoke last night might well have cast
A darkness on my spirit:—if man be
The passive thing you say, I should not see
Much harm in the religions and old saws
(Though *I* may never own such leaden laws)
Which break a teachless nature to the yoke:
Mine is another faith.»—Thus much I spoke,
And, noting he replied not, added—« See
This lovely child; blithe, innocent and free;
She spends a happy time, with little care;
While we to such sick thoughts subjected are,
As came on you last night. It is our will
Which thus enchains us to permitted ill.
We might be otherwise; we might be all
We dream of, happy, high, majestical.
Where is the love, beauty, and truth we seek,
But in our minds? And, if we were not weak,
Should we be less in deed than in desire?»—
—« Ay, if we were not weak,—and we aspire,
How vainly! to be strong,» said Maddalo:
« You talk Utopia»—

« It remains to know,»
I then rejoin'd, « and those who try, may find
How strong the chains are which our spirit bind:
Brittle perchance as straw. We are assured
Much may be conquer'd, much may be endured,
Of what degrades and crushes us. We know
That we have power over ourselves to do
And suffer—*what*, we know not till we try;
But something nobler than to live and die:
So taught the kings of old philosophy,

Who reign'd before religion made men blind;
And those who suffer with their suffering kind,
Yet feel this faith, religion.»

«My dear friend,»
Said Maddalo, «my judgment will not bend
To your opinion, though I think you might
Make such a system refutation-tight,
As far as words go. I knew one like you,
Who to this city came some months ago,
With whom I argued in this sort,—and he
Is now gone mad—and so he answer'd me,
Poor fellow!—But if you would like to go,
We 'll visit him, and his wild talk will show
How vain are such aspiring theories.»—

«I hope to prove the induction otherwise,
And that a want of that true theory still,
Which seeks a soul of goodness in things ill,
Or in himself or others, has thus bow'd
His being:—there are some by nature proud,
Who, patient in all else, demand but this—
To love and be beloved with gentleness:—
And being scorn'd, what wonder if they die
Some living death? This is not destiny,
But man's own wilful ill.»—

As thus I spoke,
Servants announced the gondola, and we
Through the fast-falling rain and high-wrought sea
Sail'd to the island where the mad-house stands.
We disembark'd. The clap of tortured hands,
Fierce yells, and howlings, and lamentings keen,
And laughter where complaint had merrier been,
Accosted us. We climb'd the oozy stairs
Into an old court-yard. I heard on high,
Then, fragments of most touching melody,
But looking up saw not the singer there.—
Through the black bars in the tempestuous air
I saw, like weeds on a wreck'd palace growing,
Long tangled locks flung wildly forth and flowing,
Of those who on a sudden were beguiled
Into strange silence, and look'd forth and smiled,
Hearing sweet sounds. Then I:—

«Methinks there were
A cure of these with patience and kind care,
If music can thus move. But what is he,
Whom we seek here?»

«Of his sad history
I know but this,» said Maddalo: «he came
To Venice a dejected man, and fame
Said he was wealthy, or he had been so.
Some thought the loss of fortune wrought him woe;
But he was ever talking in such sort
As you do,—but more sadly;—he seem'd hurt,
Even as a man with his peculiar wrong,
To hear but of the oppression of the strong,
Or those absurd deceits (I think with you
In some respects, you know) which carry through
The excellent impostors of this earth
When they outface detection. He had worth,
Poor fellow! but a humourist in his way.»—

—«Alas, what drove him mad?»

«I cannot say:
A lady came with him from France, and when
She left him and return'd, he wander'd then
About yon lonely isles of desert sand,
Till he grew wild. He had no cash or land
Remaining:—the police had brought him here—
Some fancy took him, and he would not bear
Removal, so I fitted up for him
Those rooms beside the sea, to please his whim;
And sent him busts, and books, and urns for flowers,
Which had adorn'd his life in happier hours,
And instruments of music. You may guess
A stranger could do little more or less
For one so gentle and unfortunate—
And those are his sweet strains which charm the weight
From madmen's chains, and make this hell appear
A heaven of sacred silence, hush'd to hear.»

«Nay, this was kind of you,—he had no claim,
As the world says.»

«None but the very same
Which I on all mankind, were I, as he,
Fall'n to such deep reverse. His melody
Is interrupted now; we hear the din
Of madmen, shriek on shriek, again begin:
Let us now visit him: after this strain,
He ever communes with himself again,
And sees and hears not any.»

Having said
These words, we call'd the keeper, and he led
To an apartment opening on the sea.—
There the poor wretch was sitting mournfully
Near a piano, his pale fingers twined
One with the other; and the ooze and wind
Rush'd through an open casement, and did sway
His hair, and starr'd it with the brackish spray;
His head was leaning on a music-book,
And he was muttering; and his lean limbs shook;
His lips were press'd against a folded leaf
In hue too beautiful for health, and grief
Smiled in their motions as they lay apart,
As one who wrought from his own fervid heart
The eloquence of passion: soon he raised
His sad meek face, and eyes lustrous and glazed,
And spoke,—sometimes as one who wrote, and thought
His words might move some heart that heeded not,
If sent to distant lands;—and then as one
Reproaching deeds never to be undone,
With wondering self-compassion;—then his speech
Was lost in grief, and then his words came each
Unmodulated and expressionless,—
But that from one jarr'd accent you might guess
It was despair made them so uniform:
And all the while the loud and gusty storm
Hiss'd through the window, and we stood behind,
Stealing his accents from the envious wind,
Unseen. I yet remember what he said
Distinctly, such impression his words made.

«Month after month,» he cried, «to bear this load,
And, as a jade urged by the whip and goad,
To drag life on—which like a heavy chain
Lengthens behind with many a link of pain,
And not to speak my grief—O, not to dare
To give a human voice to my despair;

But live, and move, and, wretched thing! smile on,
As if I never went aside to groan,
And wear this mask of falsehood even to those
Who are most dear—not for my own repose—
Alas! no scorn, or pain, or hate, could be
So heavy as that falsehood is to me—
But that I cannot bear more alter'd faces
Than needs must be, more changed and cold embraces,
More misery, disappointment, and mistrust
To own me for their father. Would the dust
Were cover'd in upon my body now!
That the life ceased to toil within my brow!
And then these thoughts would at the last be fled:
Let us not fear such pain can vex the dead.

« What Power delights to torture us? I know
That to myself I do not wholly owe
What now I suffer, though in part I may.
Alas! none strew'd fresh flowers upon the way
Where, wandering heedlessly, I met pale Pain,
My shadow, which will leave me not again.
If I have err'd, there was no joy in error,
But pain, and insult, and unrest, and terror;
I have not, as some do, bought penitence
With pleasure, and a dark yet sweet offence;
For then if love, and tenderness, and truth
Had overlived Hope's momentary youth,
My creed should have rédeem'd me from repenting;
But loathed scorn and outrage unrelenting
Met love exciled by far other seeming,
Until the end was gain'd:—as one from dreaming
Of sweetest peace, I woke, and found my state
Such as it is.—

« O, thou, my spirit's mate!
Who, for thou art compassionate and wise,
Wouldst pity me from thy most gentle eyes,
If this sad writing thou shouldst ever see,
My secret groans must be unheard by thee;
Thou wouldst weep tears, bitter as blood, to know
Thy lost friend's incommunicable woe.
Ye few by whom my nature has been weigh'd
In friendship, let me not that name degrade,
By plaeing on your hearts the secret load
Which crushes mine to dust. There is one road
To peace, and that is truth, which follow ye!
Love sometimes leads astray to misery.
Yet think not, though subdued (and I may well
Say that I am subdued)—that the full hell
Within me would infect the untainted breast
Of sacred nature with its own unrest;
As some perverted beings think to find
In scorn or hate a medicine for the mind
Which scorn or hate hath wounded.—O, how vain!
The dagger heals not, but may rend again.
Believe that I am ever still the same
In creed as in resolve: and what may tame
My heart, must leave the understanding free,
Or all would sink under this agony.—
Nor dream that I will join the vulgar eye,
Or with my silence sanction tyranny,
Or seek a moment's shelter from my pain
In any madness which the world calls gain;
Ambition, or revenge, or thoughts as stern
As those which make me what I am, or turn
To avarice or misanthropy or lust.
Heap on me soon, O grave, thy welcome dust!
Till then the dungeon may demand its prey;
And Poverty and Shame may meet and say,
Halting beside me in the public way,—
'That love-devoted youth is ours: let 's sit
Beside him: he may live some six months yet.'—
Or the red scaffold, as our country bends,
May ask some willing victim; or ye, friends!
May fall under some sorrow, which this heart
Or hand may share, or vanquish, or avert;
I am prepared, in truth, with no proud joy,
To do or suffer aught, as when a boy
I did devote to justice, and to love,
My nature, worthless now.

« I must remove
A veil from my pent mind. 'T is torn aside!
O! pallid as Death's dedicated bride,
Thou mockery which art sitting by my side,
Am I not wan like thee? At the grave's call
I haste, invited to thy wedding-ball,
To meet the ghastly paramour, for whom
Thou hast deserted me,—and made the tomb
Thy bridal bed. But I beside thy feet
Will lie, and watch ye from my winding-sheet
Thus—wide awake though dead——Yet stay, O, stay!
Go not so soon—I know not what I say—
Hear but my reasons—I am mad, I fear,
My fancy is o'erwrought—thou art not here.
Pale art thou, 't is most true——but thou art gone—
Thy work is finish'd; I am left alone.
* * * * * * * * *

« Nay, was it I who wooed thee to this breast,
Which like a serpent thou envenomest
As in repayment of the warmth it lent?
Didst thou not seek me for thine own content?
Did not thy love awaken mine? I thought
That thou wert she who said 'You kiss me not
Ever; I fear you do not love me now.'
In truth I loved even to my overthrow
Her, who would fain forget these words; but they
Cling to her mind, and cannot pass away.
* * * * * * * * *

« You say that I am proud; that when I speak,
My lip is tortured with the wrongs, which break
The spirit it expresses.—Never one
Humbled himself before, as I have done!
Even the instinctive worm on which we tread
Turns, though it wound not—then, with prostrate head,
Sinks in the dust, and writhes like me—and dies:
——No:—wears a living death of agonies!
As the slow shadows of the pointed grass
Mark the eternal periods, its pangs pass,
Slow, ever-moving, making moments be
As mine seem,—each an immortality!
* * * * * * * * *

« That you had never seen me! never heard
My voice! and, more than all, had ne'er endured
The deep pollution of my loathed embrace!
That your eyes ne'er had lied love in my face!
That, like some maniac monk, I had torn out
The nerves of manhood by their bleeding root

With mine own quivering fingers! so that ne'er
Our hearts had for a moment mingled there,
To disunite in horror! These were not
With thee like some suppress'd and hideous thought,
Which flits athwart our musings, but can find
No rest within a pure and gentle mind—
Thou sealedst them with many a bare broad word,
And searedst my memory o'er them,—for I heard
And can forget not—they were minister'd,
One after one, those curses. Mix them up
Like self-destroying poisons in one cup;
And they will make one blessing, which thou ne'er
Didst imprecate for on me——death!

« It were
A cruel punishment for one most cruel,
If such can love, to make that love the fuel
Of the mind's hell—hate, scorn, remorse, despair:
But *me*, whose heart a stranger's tear might wear,
As water-drops the sandy fountain-stone;
Who loved and pitied all things, and could moan
For woes which others hear not; and could see
The absent with the glass of phantasy,
And near the poor and trampled sit and weep,
Following the captive to his dungeon deep;
Me, who am as a nerve o'er which do creep
The else-unfelt oppressions of this earth,
And was to thee the flame upon thy hearth,
When all beside was cold:—that thou on me
Shouldst rain these plagues of blistering agony—
Such curses are from lips once eloquent
With love's too partial praise! Let none relent
Who intend deeds too dreadful for a name
Henceforth, if an example for the same
They seek:—for thou on me lookedst so and so,
And didst speak thus and thus. I live to show
How much men bear and die not.

* * * * * * * * *

« Thou wilt tell,
With the grimace of hate, how horrible
It was to meet my love when thine grew less;
Thou wilt admire how I could e'er address
Such features to love's work——This taunt, though true
(For indeed nature nor in form nor hue
Bestow'd on me her choicest workmanship),
Shall not be thy defence: for since thy life
Met mine first, years long past,—since thine eye kindled
With soft fire under mine,—I have not dwindled,
Nor changed in mind, or body, or in aught,
But as love changes what it loveth not
After long years and many trials.

* * * * * * * * *

« How vain
Are words! I thought never to speak again,
Not even in secret, not to my own heart—
But from my lips the unwilling accents start,
And from my pen the words flow as I write,
Dazzling my eyes with scalding tears—my sight
Is dim to see that character'd in vain,
On this unfeeling leaf, which burns the brain
And eats into it, blotting all things fair,
And wise and good, which time had written there.
Those who inflict must suffer, for they see
The work of their own hearts, and that must be
Our chastisement or recompense.—O, child!
I would that thine were like to be more mild,
For both our wretched sakes,—for thine the most,
Who feel'st already all that thou hast lost,
Without the power to wish it thine again.
And, as slow years pass, a funereal train,
Each with the ghost of some lost hope or friend
Following it like its shadow, wilt thou bend
No thought on my dead memory?

* * * * * * * * *

« Alas, love!
Fear me not: against thee I 'd not move
A finger in despite. Do I not live
That thou mayst have less bitter cause to grieve?
I give thee tears for scorn, and love for hate;
And, that thy lot may be less desolate
Than his on whom thou tramplest, I refrain
From that sweet sleep which medicines all pain.
Then—when thou speakest of me—never say,
'He could forgive not'—Here I cast away
All human passions, all revenge, all pride;
I think, speak, act no ill; I do but hide
Under these words, like embers, every spark
Of that which has consumed me. Quick and dark
The grave is yawning:—as its roof shall cover
My limbs with dust and worms, under and over,
So let oblivion hide this grief—The air
Closes upon my accents, as despair
Upon my heart—let death upon despair!»

He ceased, and overcome, leant back awhile;
Then rising, with a melancholy smile,
Went to a sofa, and lay down, and slept
A heavy sleep, and in his dreams he wept,
And mutter'd some familiar name, and we
Wept without shame in his society.
I think I never was impress'd so much;
The man who were not, must have lack'd a touch
Of human nature.—Then we linger'd not,
Although our argument was quite forgot;
But, calling the attendants, went to dine
At Maddalo's:—yet neither cheer nor wine
Could give us spirits, for we talk'd of him,
And nothing else, till daylight made stars dim.
And we agreed it was some dreadful ill
Wrought on him boldly, yet unspeakable,
By a dear friend; some deadly change in love
Of one vow'd deeply which he dream'd not of;
For whose sake he, it seem'd, had fix'd a blot
Of falsehood in his mind, which flourish'd not
But in the light of all-beholding truth;
And having stamp'd this canker on his youth,
She had abandon'd him:—and how much more
Might be his woe, we guess'd not:—he had store
Of friends and fortune once, as we could guess
From his nice habits and his gentleness:
These now were lost—it were a grief indeed
If he had changed one unsustaining reed
For all that such a man might else adorn.
The colours of his mind seemed yet unworn;
For the wild language of his grief was high—
Such as in measure were called poetry.
And I remember one remark, which then
Maddalo made: he said—« Most wretched men

Are cradled into poetry by wrong:
They learn in suffering what they teach in song.»

If I had been an unconnected man,
I, from this moment, should have form'd some plan
Never to leave sweet Venice: for to me
It was delight to ride by the lone sea:
And then the town is silent—one may write,
Or read in gondolas by day or night,
Having the little brazen lamp alight,
Unseen, uninterrupted:—books are there,
Pictures, and casts from all those statues fair
Which were twin-born with poetry;—and all
We seek in towns, with little to recal
Regret for the green country:—I might sit
In Maddalo's great palace, and his wit
And subtle talk would cheer the winter night,
And make me know myself:—and the fire-light
Would flash upon our faces, till the day
Might dawn, and make me wonder at my stay.
But I had friends in London too. The chief
Attraction here was that I sought relief
From the deep tenderness that maniac wrought
Within me—'t was perhaps an idle thought,
But I imagined that if, day by day,
I watch'd him, and seldom went away,
And studied all the beatings of his heart
With zeal, as men study some stubborn art
For their own good, and could by patience find
An entrance to the caverns of his mind,
I might reclaim him from his dark estate.
In friendships I had been most fortunate,
Yet never saw I one whom I would call
More willingly my friend;—and this was all
Accomplish'd not;—such dreams of baseless good
Oft come and go, in crowds or solitude,
And leave no trace!—but what I now design'd,
Made, for long years, impression on my mind.
—The following morning, urged by my affairs,
I left bright Venice.—

After many years,
And many changes, I return'd; the name
Of Venice, and its aspect, was the same;
But Maddalo was travelling, far away,
Among the mountains of Armenia.
His dog was dead: his child had now become
A woman, such as it has been my doom
To meet with few; a wonder of this earth,
Where there is little of transcendent worth,—
Like one of Shakspeare's women. Kindly she,
And with a manner beyond courtesy,
Received her father's friend; and, when I ask'd
Of the lorn maniac, she her memory task'd,
And told, as she had heard, the mournful tale:
« That the poor sufferer's health began to fail,
Two years from my departure; but that then
The lady, who had left him, came again.
Her mien had been imperious, but she now
Look'd meek; perhaps remorse had brought her low.
Her coming made him better; and they stay'd
Together at my father's,—for I play'd,
As I remember, with the lady's shawl;
I might be six years old:—But, after all,
She left him.»—

«Why, her heart must have been tough;
How did it end?»

« And was not this enough?
They met, they parted.»

« Child, is there no more?»

« Something within that interval, which bore
The stamp of *why* they parted, *how* they met;
Yet if thine aged eyes disdain to wet
Those wrinkled cheeks with youth's remember'd tears,
Ask me no more; but let the silent years
Be closed and cered over their memory
As yon mute marble where their corpses lie.»
I urged and question'd still: she told me how
All happen'd—but the cold world shall not know.

Rome, *May*, 1819.

THE WITCH OF ATLAS.

I.

Before those cruel Twins, whom at one birth
Incestuous Change bore to her father Time,
Error and Truth, had hunted from the earth
All those bright natures which adorn'd its prime,
And left us nothing to believe in, worth
The pains of putting into learned rhyme,
A lady-witch there lived on Atlas' mountain,
Within a cavern by a secret fountain.

II.

Her mother was one of the Atlantides:
The all-beholding Sun had ne'er beholden
In his wide voyage o'er continents and seas
So fair a creature, as she lay enfolden
In the warm shadow of her loveliness;—
He kiss'd her with his beams, and made all golden
The chamber of grey rock in which she lay—
She, in that dream of joy, dissolved away.

III.

'T is said, she was first changed into a vapour,
And then into a cloud, such clouds as flit,
Like splendour-winged moths about a taper,
Round the red west when the sun dies in it:
And then into a meteor, such as caper
On hill-tops when the moon is in a fit;
Then, into one of those mysterious stars
Which hide themselves between the Earth and Mars.

IV.

Ten times the Mother of the Months had bent
Her bow beside the folding-star, and bidden
With that bright sign the billows to indent
The sea-deserted sand: like children chidden,
At her command they ever came and went:—
Since in that cave a dewy splendour hidden,
Took shape and motion: with the living form
Of this embodied Power, the cave grew warm.

V.

A lovely lady garmented in light
From her own beauty—deep her eyes, as are
Two openings of unfathomable night
Seen through a tempest's cloven roof—her hair
Dark—the dim brain whirls dizzy with delight,
Picturing her form! her soft smiles shone afar,
And her low voice was heard like love, and drew
All living things towards this wonder new.

VI.

And first the spotted cameleopard came,
And then the wise and fearless elephant;
Then the sly serpent, in the golden flame
Of his own volumes intervolved;—all gaunt
And sanguine beasts her gentle looks made tame.
They drank before her at her sacred fount,
And every beast of beating heart grew bold,
Such gentleness and power even to behold.

VII.

The brinded lioness led forth her young,
That she might teach them how they should forego
Their inborn thirst of death; the pard unstrung
His sinews at her feet, and sought to know,
With looks whose motions spoke without a tongue,
How he might be as gentle as the doe.
The magic circle of her voice and eyes
All savage natures did imparadise.

VIII.

And old Silenus, shaking a green stick
Of lilies, and the wood-gods in a crew
Came, blithe, as in the olive copses thick
Cicadæ are, drunk with the noonday dew:
And Driope and Faunus follow'd quick,
Teasing the God to sing them something new,
Till in this cave they found the lady lone,
Sitting upon a seat of emerald stone.

IX.

And Universal Pan, 't is said, was there,
And though none saw him,—through the adamant
Of the deep mountains, through the trackless air,
And through those living spirits, like a want
He past out of his everlasting lair
Where the quick heart of the great world doth pant,
And felt that wondrous lady all alone,—
And she felt him, upon her emerald throne.

X.

And every nymph of stream and spreading tree,
And every shepherdess of Ocean's flocks,
Who drives her white waves over the green sea;
And Ocean, with the brine on his grey locks,
And quaint Priapus with his company
All came, much wondering how the enwombed rocks
Could have brought forth so beautiful a birth;—
Her love subdued their wonder and their mirth.

XI.

The herdsmen and the mountain maidens came,
And the rude kings of pastoral Garamant—
These spirits shook within them, as a flame
Stirr'd by the air under a cavern gaunt:
Pigmies, and Polyphemes, by many a name,
Centaurs and Satyrs, and such shapes as haunt
Wet clefts,—and lumps neither alive nor dead,
Dog-headed, bosom-eyed and bird-footed.

XII.

For she was beautiful: her beauty made
The bright world dim, and every thing beside
Seem'd like the fleeting image of a shade:
No thought of living spirit could abide,
Which to her looks had ever been betray'd,
On any object in the world so wide,
On any hope within the circling skies,
But on her form, and in her inmost eyes.

XIII.

Which when the lady knew, she took her spindle
And twined three threads of fleecy mist, and three
Long lines of light, such as the dawn may kindle
The clouds and waves and mountains with, and she
As many star-beams, ere their lamps could dwindle
In the belated moon, wound skilfully;
And with these threads a subtle veil she wove—
A shadow for the splendour of her love.

XIV.

The deep recesses of her odorous dwelling
Were stored with magic treasures—sounds of air,
Which had the power all spirits of compelling,
Folded in cells of crystal silence there;
Such as we hear in youth, and think the feeling
Will never die—yet ere we are aware,
The feeling and the sound are fled and gone,
And the regret they leave remains alone.

XV.

And there lay Visions swift, and sweet, and quaint,
Each in its thin sheath like a chrysalis;
Some eager to burst forth, some weak and faint
With the soft burthen of intensest bliss;
It is its work to bear to many a saint
Whose heart adores the shrine which holiest is,
Even Love's—and others white, green, grey, and black,
And of all shapes—and each was at her beck.

XVI.

And odours in a kind of aviary
Of ever-blooming Eden-trees she kept,
Clipt in a floating net, a love-sick Fairy
Had woven from dew-beams while the moon yet slept;
As bats at the wired window of a dairy,
They beat their vans; and each was an adept,
When loosed and mission'd, making wings of winds,
To stir sweet thoughts or sad in destined minds.

XVII.

And liquors clear and sweet, whose healthful might
Could medicine the sick soul to happy sleep,
And change eternal death into a night
Of glorious dreams—or if eyes needs must weep,
Could make their tears all wonder and delight,
She in her crystal vials did closely keep:
If men could drink of those clear vials, 't is said
The living were not envied of the dead.

XVIII.

Her cave was stored with scrolls of strange device,
The works of some Saturnian Archimage,
Which taught the expiations at whose price
Men from the Gods might win that happy age
Too lightly lost, redeeming native vice;
And which might quench the earth-consuming rage
Of gold and blood—till men should live and move
Harmonious as the sacred stars above.

XIX.

And how all things that seem untameable,
Not to be check'd and not to be confined,
Obey the spells of wisdom's wizard skill;
Time, Earth and Fire—the Ocean and the Wind,
And all their shapes—and man's imperial will;
And other scrolls whose writings did unbind
The inmost lore of Love—let the prophane
Tremble to ask what secrets they contain.

XX.

And wondrous works of substances unknown,
To which the enchantment of her father's power
Had changed those ragged blocks of savage stone,
Were heap'd in the recesses of her bower;
Carved lamps and chalices, and phials which shone
In their own golden beams—each like a flower,
Out of whose depth a fire-fly shakes his light
Under a cypress in a starless night.

XXI.

At first she lived alone in this wild home,
And her own thoughts were each a minister,
Clothing themselves or with the ocean-foam,
Or with the wind, or with the speed of fire,
To work whatever purposes might come
Into her mind; such power her mighty Sire
Had girt them with, whether to fly or run,
Through all the regions which he shines upon.

XXII.

The Ocean-nymphs and Hamadryades,
Oreads and Naiads with long weedy locks,
Offer'd to do her bidding through the seas,
Under the earth, and in the hollow rocks,
And far beneath the matted roots of trees,
And in the gnarl'd heart of stubborn oaks,
So they might live for ever in the light
Of her sweet presence—each a satellite.

XXIII.

« This may not be, » the wizard maid replied;
« The fountains where the Naiades bedew
Their shining hair, at length are drain'd and dried;
The solid oaks forget their strength, and strew
Their latest leaf upon the mountains wide;
The boundless ocean, like a drop of dew
Will be consumed—the stubborn centre must
Be scatter'd, like a cloud of summer dust.

XXIV.

« And ye with them will perish one by one:
If I must sigh to think that this shall be,
If I must weep when the surviving Sun
Shall smile on your decay—Oh, ask not me
To love you till your little race is run;
I cannot die as ye must—over me
Your leaves shall glance—the streams in which ye dwell
Shall be my paths henceforth, and so, farewell! »

XXV.

She spoke and wept: the dark and azure well
Sparkled beneath the shower of her bright tears,
And every little circlet where they fell,
Flung to the cavern-roof inconstant spheres
And intertangled lines of light:—a knell
Of sobbing voices came upon her ears
From those departing Forms, o'er the serene
Of the white streams and of the forest green.

XXVI.

All day the wizard lady sat aloof,
Spelling out scrolls of dread antiquity
Under the cavern's fountain-lighted roof;
Or broidering the pictured poesy
Of some high tale upon her growing woof,
Which the sweet splendour of her smiles could dye
In hues outshining heaven—and ever she
Added some grace to the wrought poesy.

XXVII.

While on her hearth lay blazing many a piece
Of sandal-wood, rare gums and cinnamon;
Men scarcely know how beautiful fire is,
Each flame of it is as a precious stone
Dissolved in ever-moving light, and this
Belongs to each and all who gaze upon.
The Witch beheld it not, for in her hand
She held a woof that dimm'd the burning brand.

XXVIII.

This lady never slept, but lay in trance
All night within the fountain—as in sleep.
Its emerald crags glow'd in her beauty's glance:
Through the green splendour of the water deep
She saw the constellations reel and dance
Like fire-flies—and withal did ever keep
The tenor of her contemplations calm,
With open eyes, closed feet and folded palm.

XXIX.

And when the whirlwinds and the clouds descended
From the white pinnacles of that cold hill,
She past at dewfall to a space extended,
Where in a lawn of flowering asphodel
Amid a wood of pines and cedars blended,
There yawn'd an inextinguishable well
Of crimson fire, full even to the brim,
And overflowing all the margin trim.

XXX.

Within the which she lay when the fierce war
Of wintry winds shook that innocuous liquor
In many a mimic moon and bearded star,
O'er woods and lawns—the serpent heard it flicker
In sleep, and dreaming still, he crept afar—
And when the windless snow descended thicker
Than autumn leaves, she watch'd it as it came
Melt on the surface of the level flame.

XXXI.

She had a Boat which some say Vulcan wrought
For Venus, as the chariot of her star;
But it was found too feeble to be fraught
With all the ardours in that sphere which are,
And so she sold it, and Apollo bought,
And gave it to this daughter: from a car
Changed to the fairest and the lightest boat
Which ever upon mortal stream did float.

XXXII.

And others say, that when but three hours old,
The first-born Love out of his cradle leapt,
And clove dun Chaos with his wings of gold,
And like a horticultural adept,
Stole a strange seed, and wrapt it up in mould,
And sow'd it in his mother's star, and kept
Watering it all the summer with sweet dew,
And with his wings fanning it as it grew.

XXXIII.

The plant grew strong and green—the snowy flower
Fell, and the long and gourd-like fruit began
To turn the light and dew by inward power
To its own substance; woven tracery ran
Of light firm texture, ribb'd and branching, o'er
The solid rind, like a leaf's veined fan,
Of which Love scoop'd this boat, and with soft motion
Piloted it round the circumfluous ocean.

XXXIV.

This boat she moor'd upon her fount, and lit
A living spirit within all its frame,
Breathing the soul of swiftness into it.
Couch'd on the fountain like a panther tame,
One of the twain at Evan's feet that sit;
Or as on Vesta's sceptre a swift flame,
Or on blind Homer's heart a winged thought,—
In joyous expectation lay the boat.

XXXV.

Then by strange art she kneaded fire and snow
Together, tempering the repugnant mass
With liquid love—all things together grow
Through which the harmony of love can pass;
And a fair Shape out of her hands did flow
A living Image, which did far surpass
In beauty that bright shape of vital stone
Which drew the heart out of Pygmalion.

XXXVI.

A sexless thing it was, and in its growth
It seem'd to have developed no defect
Of either sex, yet all the grace of both,—
In gentleness and strength its limbs were deck'd;
The bosom lightly swell'd with its full youth,
The countenance was such as might select
Some artist that his skill should never die,
Imaging forth such perfect purity.

XXXVII.

From its smooth shoulders hung two rapid wings,
Fit to have borne it to the seventh sphere,
Tipt with the speed of liquid lightnings,
Dyed in the ardours of the atmosphere:
She led her creature to the boiling springs
Where the light boat was moor'd,—and said—« Sit here!»
And pointed to the prow, and took *her* seat
Beside the rudder with opposing feet.

XXXVIII.

And down the streams which clove those mountains vast
Around their inland islets, and amid
The panther-peopled forests, whose shade cast
Darkness and odours, and a pleasure hid
In melancholy gloom, the pinnace past;
By many a star-surrounded pyramid
Of icy crag cleaving the purple sky,
And caverns yawning round unfathomably.

XXXIX.

The silver noon into that winding dell,
With slanted gleam athwart the forest tops,
Temper'd like golden evening, feebly fell;
A green and glowing light, like that which drops
From folded lilies in which glow-worms dwell,
When earth over her face night's mantle wraps;
Between the sever'd mountains lay on high
Over the stream, a narrow rift of sky.

XL.

And ever as she went, the Image lay
With folded wings and unawaken'd eyes;
And o'er its gentle countenance did play
The busy dreams, as thick as summer flies,
Chasing the rapid smiles that would not stay,
And drinking the warm tears, and the sweet sighs
Inhaling, which, with busy murmur vain,
They had aroused from that full heart and brain.

XLI.

And ever down the prone vale, like a cloud
Upon a stream of wind, the pinnace went:
Now lingering on the pools, in which abode
The calm and darkness of the deep content
In which they paused; now o'er the shallow road
Of white and dancing waters all besprent
With sand and polish'd pebbles:—mortal boat
In such a shallow rapid could not float.

XLII.

And down the earthquaking cataracts which shiver
Their snow-like waters into golden air,
Or under chasms unfathomable ever
Sepulchre them, till in their rage they tear
A subterranean portal for the river,
It fled—the circling sun-bows did upbear
Its fall down the hoar precipice of spray,
Lighting it far upon its lampless way.

XLIII.

And when the wizard lady would ascend
The labyrinths of some many-winding vale,
Which to the inmost mountain upward tend—
She call'd « Hermaphroditus!» and the pale
And heavy hue which slumber could extend
Over its lips and eyes, as on the gale
A rapid shadow from a slope of grass,
Into the darkness of the stream did pass.

XLIV.

And it unfurl'd its heaven-colour'd pinions,
With stars of fire spotting the stream below;
And from above into the Sun's dominions
Flinging a glory, like the golden glow
In which spring clothes her emerald-winged minions,
All interwoven with fine feathery snow
And moonlight splendour of intensest rime,
With which frost paints the pines in winter-time.

XLV.

And then it winnow'd the Elysian air
Which ever hung about that lady bright,
With its ethereal vans—and speeding there,
Like a star up the torrent of the night,
Or a swift eagle in the morning glare
Breasting the whirlwind with impetuous flight;
The pinnace, oar'd by those enchanted wings,
Clove the fierce streams towards their upper springs.

XLVI.

The water flash'd like sunlight, by the prow
Of a noon-wandering meteor flung to Heaven;
The still air seem'd as if its waves did flow
In tempest down the mountains,—loosely driven,
The lady's radiant hair stream'd to and fro:
Beneath, the billows having vainly striven
Indignant and impetuous, roar'd to feel
The swift and steady motion of the keel.

XLVII.

Or, when the weary moon was in the wane,
Or in the noon of interlunar night,
The lady-witch in visions could not chain
Her spirit; but sail'd forth under the light
Of shooting stars, and bade extend amain
His storm-outspeeding wings, th' Hermaphrodite;
She to the Austral waters took her way,
Beyond the fabulous Thamondocona.

XLVIII.

Where, like a meadow which no scythe has shaven,
Which rain could never bend, or whirl-blast shake,
With the Antarctic constellations haven,
Canopus and his crew, lay th' Austral lake—
There she would build herself a windless haven
Out of the clouds whose moving turrets make
The bastions of the storm, when through the sky
The spirits of the tempest thunder'd by.

XLIX.

A haven, beneath whose translucent floor
The tremulous stars sparkled unfathomably,
And around which, the solid vapours hoar,
Based on the level waters, to the sky
Lifted their dreadful crags; and like a shore
Of wintry mountains, inaccessibly
Hemm'd in with rifts and precipices grey,
And hanging crags, many a cove and bay.

L.

And whilst the outer lake beneath the lash
Of the winds' scourge, foam'd like a wounded thing;
And the incessant hail with stony clash
Plough'd up the waters, and the flagging wing
Of the roused cormorant in the lightning flash
Look'd like the wreck of some wind-wandering
Fragment of inky thunder-smoke—this haven
Was as a gem to copy Heaven engraven.

LI.

On which that lady play'd her many pranks,
Circling the image of a shooting star,
Even as a tiger on Hydaspes' banks
Outspeeds the antelopes which speediest are,
In her light boat; and many quips and cranks
She play'd upon the water; till the car
Of the late moon, like a sick matron wan,
To journey from the misty east began.

LII.

And then she call'd out of the hollow turrets
Of those high clouds, white, golden and vermilion,
The armies of her ministering spirits—
In mighty legions, million after million
They came, each troop emblazoning its merits
On meteor flags; and many a proud pavilion,
Of the intertexture of the atmosphere,
They pitch'd upon the plain of the calm mere.

LIII.

They framed the imperial tent of their great Queen
Of woven exhalations, underlaid
With lambent lightning-fire, as may be seen
A dome of thin and open ivory inlaid
With crimson silk—cressets from the serene
Hung there, and on the water for her tread,
A tapestry of fleece-like mist was strewn,
Dyed in the beams of the ascending moon.

LIV.

And on a throne o'erlaid with star-light, caught
Upon those wandering isles of aëry dew,
Which highest shoals of mountain shipwreck not,
She sate, and heard all that had happen'd new
Between the earth and moon since they had brought
The last intelligence—and now she grew
Pale as that moon, lost in the watery night—
And now she wept, and now she laugh'd outright.

LV.

These were tame pleasures.—She would often climb
The steepest ladder of the crudded rack
Up to some beaked cape of cloud sublime,
And like Arion on the dolphin's back
Ride singing through the shoreless air. Oft time
Following the serpent lightning's winding track,
She ran upon the platforms of the wind,
And laugh'd to hear the fire-balls roar behind.

LVI.

And sometimes to those streams of upper air,
Which whirl the earth in its diurnal round,
She would ascend, and win the spirits there
To let her join their chorus. Mortals found
That on those days the sky was calm and fair,
And mystic snatches of harmonious sound
Wander'd upon the earth where'er she past,
And happy thoughts of hope, too sweet to last.

LVII.

But her choice sport was, in the hours of sleep,
To glide adown old Nilus, when he threads
Egypt and Æthiopia, from the steep
Of utmost Axumè, until he spreads,
Like a calm flock of silver-fleeced sheep,
His waters on the plain: and crested heads
Of cities and proud temples gleam amid,
And many a vapour-belted pyramid.

LVIII.

By Mæris and the Mareotid lakes,
Strewn with faint blooms like bridal-chamber floors;
Where naked boys bridling tame water-snakes,
Or charioteering ghastly alligators,
Had left on the sweet waters mighty wakes
Of those huge forms:—within the brazen doors
Of the great Labyrinth slept both boy and beast,
Tired with the pomp of their Osirian feast.

LIX.

And where within the surface of the river
The shadows of the massy temples lie,
And never are erased—but tremble ever
Like things which every cloud can doom to die,
Through lotus-paven canals, and whereso'er
The works of man pierced that serenest sky
With tombs, and towers, and fanes, 't was her delight
To wander in the shadow of the night.

LX.

With motion like the spirit of that wind
Whose soft step deepens slumber, her light feet
Past through the peopled haunts of human kind,
Scattering sweet visions from her presence sweet,
Through fane and palace-court and labyrinth mined
With many a dark and subterranean street
Under the Nile; through chambers high and deep
She past, observing mortals in their sleep.

LXI.

A pleasure sweet doubtless it was to see
Mortals subdued in all the shapes of sleep.
Here lay two sister-twins in infancy;
There, a lone youth who in his dreams did weep;
Within, two lovers link'd innocently
In their loose locks which over both did creep
Like ivy from one stem;—and there lay calm,
Old age with snow-bright hair and folded palm.

LXII.

But other troubled forms of sleep she saw,
Not to be mirror'd in a holy song,
Distortions foul of supernatural awe,
And pale imaginings of vision'd wrong,
And all the code of custom's lawless law
Written upon the brows of old and young:
"This," said the wizard maiden, "is the strife,
Which stirs the liquid surface of man's life."

LXIII.

And little did the sight disturb her soul—
We, the weak mariners of that wide lake,
Where'er its shores extend or billows roll,
Our course unpiloted and starless make
O'er its wild surface to an unknown goal—
But she in the calm depths her way could take,
Where in bright bowers immortal forms abide,
Beneath the weltering of the restless tide.

LXIV.

And she saw princes couch'd under the glow
Of sunlike gems; and round each temple-court
In dormitories ranged, row after row,
She saw the priests asleep,—all of one sort,
For all were educated to be so;—
The peasants in their huts, and in the port
The sailors she saw cradled on the waves,
And the dead lull'd within their dreamless graves.

LXV.

And all the forms in which those spirits lay,
Were to her sight like the diaphanous
Veils, in which those sweet ladies oft array
Their delicate limbs, who would conceal from us
Only their scorn of all concealment: they
Move in the light of their own beauty thus.
But these, and all, now lay with sleep upon them,
And little thought a Witch was looking on them.

LXVI.

She all those human figures breathing there
Beheld as living spirits—to her eyes
The naked beauty of the soul lay bare,
And often through a rude and worn disguise
She saw the inner form most bright and fair—
And then,—she had a charm of strange device,
Which murmur'd on mute lips with tender tone,
Could make that spirit mingle with her own.

LXVII.

Alas, Aurora! what wouldst thou have given,
For such a charm, when Tithon became grey!
Or how much, Venus, of thy silver Heaven
Wouldst thou have yielded, ere Proserpina
Had half (oh! why not all?) the debt forgiven
Which dear Adonis had been doom'd to pay,
To any witch who would have taught you it!
The Heliad doth not know its value yet.

LXVIII.

'T is said in after-times her spirit free
Knew what love was, and felt itself alone—
But holy Dian could not chaster be
Before she stoop'd to kiss Endymion,
Than now this lady—like a sexless bee
Tasting all blossoms, and confined to none—
Among those mortal forms, the wizard-maiden
Pass'd with an eye serene and heart unladen.

LXIX.

To those she saw most beautiful, she gave
Strange panacea in a crystal bowl.
They drank in their deep sleep of that sweet wave,
And lived thenceforth as if some control
Mightier than life, were in them; and the grave
Of such, when death oppress'd the weary soul,
Was as a green and overarching bower
Lit by the gems of many a starry flower.

LXX.

For on the night that they were buried, she
Restored the embalmers' ruining, and shook
The light out of the funeral lamps, to be
A mimic day within that deathy nook;
And she unwound the woven imagery
Of second childhood's swaddling bands, and took
The coffin, its last cradle, from its niche,
And threw it with contempt into a ditch.

LXXI.

And there the body lay, age after age,
Mute, breathing, beating, warm, and undecaying,
Like one asleep in a green hermitage,
With gentle sleep about its eyelids playing,
And living in its dreams beyond the rage
Of death or life; while they were still arraying
In liveries ever new, the rapid, blind
And fleeting generations of mankind.

LXXII.

And she would write strange dreams upon the brain
Of those who were less beautiful, and make
All harsh and crooked purposes more vain
Than in the desert is the serpent's wake
Which the sand covers,—all his evil gain
The miser in such dreams would rise and shake
Into a beggar's lap;—the lying scribe
Would his own lies betray without a bribe.

LXXIII.

The priests would write an explanation full,
Translating hieroglyphics into Greek,
How the god Apis really was a bull,
And nothing more; and bid the herald stick
The same against the temple-doors, and pull
The old cant down; they licensed all to speak
Whate'er they thought of hawks, and cats, and geese,
By pastoral letters to each diocese.

LXXIV.

The king would dress an ape up in his crown
And robes, and seat him on his glorious seat,
And on the right hand of the sunlike throne
Would place a gaudy mock-bird to repeat
The chatterings of the monkey.—Every one
Of the prone courtiers crawl'd to kiss the feet
Of their great Emperor when the morning came;
And kiss'd—alas, how many kiss the same!

LXXV.

The soldiers dream'd that they were blacksmiths, and
Walk'd out of quarters in somnambulism:
Round the red anvils you might see them stand
Like Cyclopses in Vulcan's sooty abysm,
Beating their swords to ploughshares;—in a band
The jailors sent those of the liberal schism
Free through the streets of Memphis; much, I wis,
To the annoyance of king Amasis.

LXXVI.

And timid lovers, who had been so coy
They hardly knew whether they loved or not,
Would rise out of their rest, and take sweet joy,
To the fulfilment of their inmost thought;
And when next day the maiden and the boy
Met one another, both, like sinners caught,
Blush'd at the thing which each believed was done
Only in fancy—till the tenth moon shone;

LXXVII.

And then the Witch would let them take no ill:
Of many thousand schemes which lovers find
The Witch found one,—and so they took their fill
Of happiness in marriage warm and kind.
Friends who by practice of some envious skill
Were torn apart, a wide wound, mind from mind!
She did unite again with visions clear
Of deep affection and of truth sincere.

LXXVIII.

These were the pranks she play'd among the cities
Of mortal men, and what she did to sprites
And Gods, entangling them in her sweet ditties
To do her will, and show their subtle slights,
I will declare another time; for it is
A tale more fit for the weird winter nights—
Than for these garish summer days, when we
Scarcely believe much more than we can see.

THE TRIUMPH OF LIFE.

Swift as a spirit hastening to his task
Of glory and of good, the Sun sprang forth
Rejoicing in his splendour, and the mask

Of darkness fell from the awaken'd Earth—
The smokeless altars of the mountain snows
Flamed above crimson clouds, and at the birth

Of light, the Ocean's orison arose,
To which the birds temper'd their matin lay;
All flowers in field or forest which unclose

Their trembling eyelids to the kiss of day,
Swinging their censers in the element,
With orient incense lit by the new ray,

Burn'd slow and inconsumably, and sent
Their odorous sighs up to the smiling air;
And, in succession due, did continent,

Isle, ocean, and all things that in them wear
The form and character of mortal mould,
Rise as the sun their father rose, to bear

Their portion of the toil, which he of old
Took as his own and then imposed on them:
But I, whom thoughts which must remain untold

Had kept as wakeful as the stars that gem
The cone of night, now they were laid asleep,
Stretch'd my faint limbs beneath the hoary stem

Which an old chesnut flung athwart the steep
Of a green Apennine: before me fled
The night; behind me rose the day; the deep

Was at my feet, and Heaven above my head,
When a strange trance over my fancy grew
Which was not slumber, for the shade it spread

Was so transparent, that the scene came through
As clear as when a veil of light is drawn
O'er evening hills they glimmer; and I knew

That I had felt the freshness of that dawn,
Bathed in the same cold dew my brow and hair,
And sate as thus upon that slope of lawn

Under the self same bough, and heard as there
The birds, the fountains, and the ocean hold
Sweet talk in music through the enamour'd air,
And then a vision on my brain was roll'd.

As in that trance of wondrous thought I lay,
This was the tenor of my waking dream:—
Methought I sate beside a public way

Thick strewn with summer dust, and a great stream
Of people there was hurrying to and fro,
Numerous as gnats upon the evening gleam,

All hastening onward; yet none seem'd to know
Whither he went, or whence he came, or why
He made one of the multitude, and so

Was borne amid the crowd, as through the sky
One of the million leaves of summer's bier;
Old age and youth, manhood and infancy,

Mix'd in one mighty torrent did appear,
Some flying from the thing they fear'd, and some
Seeking the object of another's fear;

And others, as with steps towards the tomb,
Pored on the trodden worms that crawl'd beneath;
And others mournfully within the gloom

Of their own shadow walk'd, and call'd it death;
And some fled from it as it were a ghost,
Half fainting in the affliction of vain breath:

But more, with motions which each other crost,
Pursued or spurn'd the shadows the clouds threw,
Or birds within the noon-day ether lost,

Upon that path where flowers never grew,
And weary with vain toil and faint for thirst,
Heard not the fountains, whose melodious dew

Out of their mossy cells for ever burst;
Nor felt the breeze which from the forest told
Of grassy paths and wood, lawn-interspersed,

With over-arching elms and caverns cold,
And violet banks where sweet dreams brood, but they
Pursued their serious folly as of old.

And as I gazed, methought that in the way
The throng grew wilder, as the woods of June
When the south wind shakes the extinguish'd day;

And a cold glare, intenser than the noon,
But icy cold, obscured with [blinding] light
The sun, as he the stars. Like the young moon,

When on the sunlit limits of the night
Her white shell trembles amid crimson air,
And whilst the sleeping tempest gathers might,

Doth, as the herald of its coming, bear
The ghost of its dead mother, whose dim frown
Bends in dark ether from her infant's chair,—

So came a chariot on the silent storm
Of its own rushing splendour, and a Shape
So sate within, as one whom years deform,

Beneath a dusky hood and double cape,
Crouching within the shadow of a tomb;
And o'er what seem'd the head a cloud-like crape

Was bent, a dun and faint ethereal gloom
Tempering the light upon the chariot beam;
A Janus-visaged shadow did assume

The guidance of that wonder-winged team;
The shapes which drew in thick lightnings
Were lost:—I heard alone on the air's soft stream

The music of their ever-moving wings.
All the four faces of that charioteer
Had their eyes banded; little profit brings

Speed in the van and blindness in the rear,
Nor then avail the beams that quench the sun,
Or that with banded eyes could pierce the sphere

Of all that is, has been or will be done;
So ill was the car guided—but it past
With solemn speed majestically on.

The crowd gave way, and I arose aghast,
Or seem'd to rise, so mighty was the trance,
And saw, like clouds upon the thunder's blast,

The million with fierce song and maniac dance
Raging around—such seem'd the jubilee
As when to meet some conqueror's advance

Imperial Rome poured forth her living sea,
From senate-house, and forum, and theatre,
When [ ] upon the free

Had bound a yoke, which soon they stoop'd to bear.
Nor wanted here the just similitude
Of a triumphal pageant, for where'er

The chariot roll'd, a captive multitude
Was driven;—all those who had grown old in power
Or misery,—all who had their age subdued

By action or by suffering, and whose hour
Was drain'd to its last sand in weal or woe,
So that the trunk survived both fruit and flower;—

All those whose fame or infamy must grow
Till the great winter lay the form and name
Of this green earth with them for ever low;—

All but the sacred few who could not tame
Their spirits to the conquerors—but as soon
As they had touch'd the world with living flame,

Fled back like eagles to their native noon;
Or those who put aside the diadem
Of earthly thrones or gems [ ]

Were there, of Athens or Jerusalem,
Were neither 'mid the mighty captives seen,
Nor 'mid the ribald crowd that follow'd them,

Nor those who went before fierce and obscene.
The wild dance maddens in the van, and those
Who lead it, fleet as shadows on the green,

Outspeed the chariot, and without repose
Mix with each other in tempestuous measure
To savage music; wilder as it grows,

They, tortured by their agonizing pleasure,
Convulsed and on the rapid whirlwinds spun
Of that fierce spirit, whose unholy leisure

Was soothed by mischief since the world begun,
Throw back their heads and loose their streaming hair;
And in their dance round her who dims the sun,

Maidens and youths fling their wild arms in air;
As their feet twinkle, they recede, and now
Bending within each other's atmosphere

Kindle invisibly—and as they glow,
Like moths by light attracted and repell'd,
Oft to their bright destruction come and go,

Till, like two clouds into one vale impell'd,
That shake the mountains when their lightnings mingle,
And die in rain—the fiery band which held

Their natures, snaps—the shock still may tingle;
One falls and then another in the path
Senseless—nor is the desolation single;

Yet ere I can say *where*—the chariot hath
Past over them—nor other trace I find
But as of foam after the ocean's wrath

Is spent upon the desert shore:—behind,
Old men and women foully disarray'd,
Shake their grey hairs in the insulting wind,

To seek, to [ ], to strain with limbs decay'd,
Limping to reach the light which leaves them still
Farther behind and deeper in the shade.

But not the less with impotence of will
They wheel, though ghastly shadows interpose
Round them and round each other, and fulfil

Their work, and in the dust from whence they rose
Sink, and corruption veils them as they lie,
And past in these performs what [ ] in those.

Struck to the heart by this sad pageantry,
Half to myself I said—And what is this?
Whose shape is that within the car? And why—

I would have added—is all here amiss?—
But a voice answer'd—« Life!»—I turn'd, and knew
(Oh Heaven, have mercy on such wretchedness!)

That what I thought was an old root which grew
To strange distortion out of the hill-side,
Was indeed one of those deluded crew,

And that the grass, which methought hung so wide
And white, was but his thin discolour'd hair,
And that the holes it vainly sought to hide,

Were or had been eyes:—« If thou canst, forbear
To join the dance, which I had well foreborne!»
Said the grim Feature of my thought: « Aware,

« I will unfold that which to this deep scorn
Led me and my companions, and relate
The progress of the pageant since the morn;

« If thirst of knowledge shall not then abate,
Follow it thou even to the night, but I
Am weary.»—Then like one who with the weight

Of his own words is stagger'd, wearily
He paused; and ere he could resume, I cried:
« First, who art thou?»—« Before thy memory,

« I fear'd, loved, hated, suffer'd, did and died,
And if the spark with which Heaven lit my spirit
Had been with purer sentiment supplied,

« Corruption would not now thus much inherit
Of what was once Rousseau,—nor this disguise
Stain'd that which ought to have disdain'd to wear it;

« If I have been extinguish'd, yet there rise
A thousand beacons from the spark I bore»—
« And who are those chain'd to the car?»—« The wise,

« The great, the unforgotten,—they who wore
Mitres and helms and crowns, or wreaths of light,
Signs of thought's empire over thought—their lore

« Taught them not this, to know themselves; their might
Could not repress the mystery within,
And for the morn of truth they feign'd, deep night

« Caught them ere evening.»—« Who is he with chin
Upon his breast, and hands crost on his chain?»—
« The Child of a fierce hour; he sought to win

« The world, and lost all that it did contain
Of greatness, in its hope destroy'd; and more
Of fame and peace than virtue's self can gain,

« Without the opportunity which bore
Him on its eagle pinions to the peak
From which a thousand climbers have before

« Fall'n, as Napoleon fell.»—I felt my cheek
Alter, to see the shadow pass away
Whose grasp had left the giant world so weak,

That every pigmy kick'd it as it lay;
And much I grieved to think how power and will
In opposition rule our mortal day,

And why God made irreconcilable
Good and the means of good; and for despair
I half disdain'd mine eyes' desire to fill

With the spent vision of the times that were
And scarce have ceased to be.—« Dost thou behold,»
Said my guide, « those spoilers spoil'd, Voltaire,

« Frederic, and Paul, Catherine, and Leopold,
And hoary anarchs, demagogues, and sage—
—— names the world thinks always old,

« For in the battle, life and they did wage,
She remain'd conqueror. I was overcome
By my own heart alone, which neither age,

« Nor tears, nor infamy, nor now the tomb
Could temper to its object.»—« Let them pass,»
I cried, « the world and its mysterious doom

« Is not so much more glorious than it was,
That I desire to worship those who drew
New figures on its false and fragile glass

« As the old faded.»—« Figures ever new
Rise on the bubble, paint them as you may;
We have but thrown, as those before us threw,

« Our shadows on it as it past away.
But mark how chain'd to the triumphal chair
The mighty phantoms of an elder day;

« All that is mortal of great Plato there
Expiates the joy and woe his master knew not;
The star that ruled his doom was far too fair,

« And life, where long that flower of Heaven grew not,
Conquer'd that heart by love, which gold, or pain,
Or age, or sloth, or slavery could subdue not.

« And near walk the [ ] twain,
The tutor and his pupil, whom Dominion
Follow'd as tame as vulture in a chain.

« The world was darken'd beneath either pinion
Of him whom from the flock of conquerors
Fame singled out for her thunder-bearing minion;

« The other long outlived both woes and wars,
Throned in the thoughts of men, and still had kept
The jealous key of truth's eternal doors,

« If Bacon's eagle spirit had not leapt
Like lightning out of darkness—he compell'd
The Proteus shape of Nature as it slept

« To wake, and lead him to the caves that held
The treasure of the secrets of its reign.
See the great bards of elder time, who quell'd

The passions which they sung, as by their strain
May well be known: their living melody
Tempers its own contagion to the vein

« Of those who are infected with it—I
Have suffer'd what I wrote, or viler pain!
And so my words have seeds of misery»——

* * * * *
* * * *
* * * *

[There is a chasm here in the MS. which it is impossible to fill up. It appears from the context, that other shapes pass, and that Rousseau still stood beside the dreamer, as]—

———he pointed to a company,
Midst whom I quickly recognised the heirs
Of Cæsar's crime, from him to Constantine;
The anarch chiefs, whose force and murderous snares

Had founded many a sceptre-bearing line,
And spread the plague of gold and blood abroad:
And Gregory and John, and men divine,

Who rose like shadows between man and God;
Till that eclipse, still hanging over heaven,
Was worshipp'd by the world o'er which they strode,

For the true sun it quench'd—«Their power was given
But to destroy,» replied the leader:—«I
Am one of those who have created, even

« If it be but a world of agony.»—
« Whence comest thou? and whither goest thou?
How did thy course begin?» I said, « and why?

« Mine eyes are sick of this perpetual flow
Of people, and my heart sick of one sad thought—
Speak!»—«Whence I am, I partly seem to know,

« And how and by what paths I have been brought
To this dread pass, methinks even thou mayst guess;—
Why this should be, my mind can compass not;

« Whither the conqueror hurries me, still less;—
But follow thou, and from spectator turn
Actor or victim in this wretchedness,

« And what thou wouldst be taught I then may learn
From thee. Now listen:—In the April prime,
When all the forest tips began to burn

« With kindling green, touch'd by the azure clime
Of the young year's dawn, I was laid asleep
Under a mountain, which from unknown time

« Had yawn'd into a cavern, high and deep;
And from it came a gentle rivulet,
Whose water, like clear air, in its calm sweep

« Bent the soft grass, and kept forever wet
The stems of the sweet flowers, and fill'd the grove
With sounds which whoso hears must needs forget

« All pleasure and all pain, all hate and love,
Which they had known before that hour of rest;
A sleeping mother then would dream not of

« Her only child who died upon her breast
At eventide—a king would mourn no more
The crown of which his brows were dispossest

« When the sun linger'd o'er his ocean floor,
To gild his rival's new prosperity.
Thou wouldst forget thus vainly to deplore

« Ills, which if ills can find no cure from thee,
The thought of which no other sleep will quell,
Nor other music blot from memory,

« So sweet and deep is the oblivious spell;
And whether life had been before that sleep
The heaven which I imagine, or a hell

« Like this harsh world in which I wake to weep,
I know not. I arose, and for a space
The scene of woods and waters seem'd to keep,

« Though it was now broad day, a gentle trace
Of light diviner than the common sun
Sheds on the common earth, and all the place

« Was fill'd with magic sounds woven into one
Oblivious melody, confusing sense
Amid the gliding waves and shadows dun;

« And, as I look'd, the bright omnipresence
Of morning through the orient cavern flow'd,
And the sun's image radiantly intense

« Burn'd on the waters of the well that glow'd
Like gold, and threaded all the forest's maze
With winding paths of emerald fire; there stood

« Amid the sun, as he amid the blaze
Of his own glory, on the vibrating
Floor of the fountain, paved with flashing rays,

« A Shape all light, which with one hand did fling
Dew on the earth, as if she were the dawn,
And the invisible rain did ever sing

« A silver music on the mossy lawn;
And still before me on the dusky grass,
Iris her many-colour'd scarf had drawn:

« In her right hand she bore a crystal glass,
Mantling with bright Nepenthe; the fierce splendour
Fell from her as she moved under the mass

« Out of the deep cavern, with palms so tender,
Their tread broke not the mirror of its billow;
She glided along the river, and did bend her

« Head under the dark boughs, till like a willow,
Her fair hair swept the bosom of the stream
That whisper'd with delight to be its pillow.

« As one enamour'd is upborne in dream
O'er lily-paven lakes 'mid silver mist,
To wondrous music, so this shape might seem

« Partly to tread the waves with feet which kiss'd
The dancing foam; partly to glide along
The air which roughen'd the moist amethyst,

« Or the faint morning beams that fell among
The trees, or the soft shadows of the trees;
And her feet, ever to the ceaseless song

« Of leaves, and winds, and waves, and birds, and bees,
And falling drops, moved to a measure new
Yet sweet, as on the summer evening breeze,

« Up from the lake a shape of golden dew
Between two rocks, athwart the rising moon,
Dances i' the wind, where never eagle flew;

« And still her feet, no less than the sweet tune
To which they moved, seem'd as they moved, to blot
The thoughts of him who gazed on them; and soon

« All that was, seem'd as if it had been not;
And all the gazer's mind was strewn beneath
Her feet like embers; and she, thought by thought,

« Trampled its sparks into the dust of death;
As day upon the threshold of the east
Treads out the lamps of night, until the breath

« Of darkness re-illumine even the least
Of heaven's living eyes—like day she came,
Making the night a dream; and ere she ceased

« To move, as one between desire and shame
Suspended, I said—If, as it doth seem,
Thou comest from the realm without a name,

« Into this valley of perpetual dream,
Show whence I came, and where I am, and why—
Pass not away upon the passing stream.

« Arise and quench thy thirst, was her reply.
And as a shut lily, stricken by the wand
Of dewy morning's vital alchemy,

« I rose; and, bending at her sweet command,
Touch'd with faint lips the cup she raised,
And suddenly my brain became as sand

« Where the first wave had more than half erased
The track of deer on desert Labrador;
Whilst the wolf, from which they fled amazed,

« Leaves his stamp visibly upon the shore,
Until the second bursts;—so on my sight
Burst a new vision, never seen before,

« And the fair shape waned in the coming light,
As veil by veil the silent splendour drops
From Lucifer, amid the chrysolite

« Of sun-rise, ere it tinge the mountain-tops;
And as the presence of that fairest planet,
Although unseen, is felt by one who hopes

« That his day's path may end as he began it,
In that star's smile, whose light is like the scent
Of a jonquil when evening breezes fan it,

« Or the soft note in which his dear lament
The Brescian shepherd breathes, or the caress
That turn'd his weary slumber to content; [1]

« So knew I in that light's severe excess
The presence of that shape which on the stream
Moved, as I moved along the wilderness,

« More dimly than a day-appearing dream,
The ghost of a forgotten form asleep;
A light of heaven, whose half-extinguish'd beam

« Through the sick day in which we wake to weep,
Glimmers, for ever sought, for ever lost;
So did that shape its obscure tenour keep

« Beside my path, as silent as a ghost;
But the new Vision, and the cold bright car,
With solemn speed and stunning music, crost

« The forest, and as if from some dread war
Triumphantly returning, the loud million
Fiercely extoll'd the fortune of her star.

« A moving arch of victory, the vermilion
And green and azure plumes of Iris had
Built high over her wind-wing'd pavilion,

« And underneath ethereal glory clad
The wilderness, and far before her flew
The tempest of the splendour, which forbade

« Shadow to fall from leaf and stone; the crew
Seem'd in that light like atomics to dance
Within a sunbeam;—some upon the new

« Embroidery of flowers, that did enhance
The grassy vesture of the desert, play'd,
Forgetful of the chariot's swift advance;

« Others stood gazing, till within the shade
Of the great mountain its light left them dim;
Others outspeeded it; and others made

« Circles around it, like the clouds that swim
Round the high moon in a bright sea of air;
And more did follow, with exulting hymn,

« The chariot and the captives fetter'd there:—
But all like bubbles on an eddying flood
Fell into the same track at last, and were

« Borne onward.—I among the multitude
Was swept—me, sweetest flowers delay'd not long;
Me, not the shadow nor the solitude;

« Me, not that falling stream's Lethean song;
Me, not the phantom of that early form,
Which moved upon its motion—but among

« The thickest billows of that living storm
I plunged, and bared my bosom to the clime
Of that cold light, whose airs too soon deform.

« Before the chariot had begun to climb
The opposing steep of that mysterious dell,
Behold a wonder worthy of the rhyme

« Of him who from the lowest depths of hell,
Through every paradise and through all glory,
Love led serene, and who return'd to tell

[1] The favourite song, « Stanco di pascolar le peccorelle, » is a Brescian national air.

« The words of hate and care; the wondrous story
How all things are transfigured except Love;
For deaf as is a sea, which wrath makes hoary,

« The world can hear not the sweet notes that move
The sphere whose light is melody to lovers—
A wonder worthy of his rhyme—the grove

« Grew dense with shadows to its inmost covers,
The earth was grey with phantoms, and the air
Was peopled with dim forms, as when there hovers

« A flock of vampire-bats before the glare
Of the tropic sun, bringing, ere evening,
Strange night upon some Indian vale;—thus were

« Phantoms diffused around; and some did fling
Shadows of shadows, yet unlike themselves,
Behind them; some like eaglets on the wing

« Were lost in the white day; others like elves
Danced in a thousand unimagined shapes
Upon the sunny streams and grassy shelves;

« And others sate chattering like restless apes
On vulgar hands, * * * * *
Some made a cradle of the ermined capes

« Of kingly mantles; some across the tire
Of pontiffs rode, like demons; others play'd
Under the crown which girt with empire

« A baby's or an idiot's brow, and made
Their nests in it. The old anatomies
Sate hatching their bare broods under the shade

« Of demon wings, and laugh'd from their dead eyes
To reassume the delegated power,
Array'd in which those worms did monarchize,

« Who make this earth their charnel. Others more
Humble, like falcons, sate upon the fist
Of common men, and round their heads did soar;

« Or like small gnats and flies, as thick as mist
On evening marshes, throng'd about the brow
Of lawyers, statesmen, priest and theorist:—

« And others, like discolour'd flakes of snow
On fairest bosoms and the sunniest hair,
Fell, and were melted by the youthful glow

« Which they extinguish'd; and, like tears, they were
A veil to those from whose faint lids they rain'd
In drops of sorrow. I became aware

« Of whence those forms proceeded which thus stain'd
The track in which we moved. After brief space,
From every form the beauty slowly waned;

« From every firmest limb and fairest face
The strength and freshness fell like dust, and left
The action and the shape without the grace

« Of life. The marble brow of youth was cleft
With care; and in those eyes where once hope shone,
Desire, like a lioness bereft

« Of her last cub, glared ere it died; each one
Of that great crowd sent forth incessantly
These shadows, numerous as the dead leaves blown

« In autumn evening from a poplar-tree.
Each like himself and like each other were
At first; but some distorted, seem'd to be

« Obscure clouds, moulded by the casual air;
And of this stuff the car's creative ray
Wrapt all the busy phantoms that were there,

« As the sun shapes the clouds; thus on the way
Mask after mask fell from the countenance
And form of all; and long before the day

« Was old, the joy which waked like heaven's glance
The sleepers in the oblivious valley, died;
And some grew weary of the ghastly dance,

« And fell, as I have fallen, by the way side;—
Those soonest from whose forms most shadows past,
And least of strength and beauty did abide.»

« Then, what is life? I cried.»—

LINES WRITTEN AMONG THE EUGANEAN HILLS.

OCTOBER, 1818.

These lines were written after a day's excursion among those lonely mountains which surround what was once the retreat, and where is now the sepulchre, of Petrarch. If any one is inclined to condemn the insertion of the introductory lines, which image forth the sudden relief of a state of deep despondency by the radiant visions disclosed by the sudden burst of an Italian sunrise in autumn on the highest peak of those delightful mountains, I can only offer as my excuse, that they were not erased at the request of a dear friend, with whom added years of intercourse only add to my apprehension of its value, and who would have had more right than any one to complain, that she has not been able to extinguish in me the very power of delineating sadness.

Many a green isle needs must be
In the deep wide sea of misery,
Or the mariner, worn and wan,
Never thus could voyage on
Day and night, and night and day,
Drifting on his dreary way,
With the solid darkness black
Closing round his vessel's track;
Whilst above, the sunless sky,
Big with clouds, hangs heavily,
And behind the tempest fleet
Hurries on with lightning feet,
Riving sail, and cord, and plank,
Till the ship has almost drank
Death from the o'er-brimming deep;
And sinks down, down, like that sleep
When the dreamer seems to be
Weltering through eternity;
And the dim low line before
Of a dark and distant shore
Still recedes, as ever still
Longing with divided will,

But no power to seek or shun,
He is ever drifted on
O'er the unreposing wave,
To the haven of the grave.
What, if there no friends will greet;
What, if there no heart will meet
His with love's impatient beat;
Wander wheresoe'er he may,
Can he dream before that day
To find refuge from distress
In friendship's smile, in love's caress?
Then 't will wreak him little woe
Whether such there be or no:
Senseless is the breast, and cold,
Which relenting love would fold;
Bloodless are the veins and chill
Which the pulse of pain did fill;
Every little living nerve
That from bitter words did swerve
Round the tortured lips and brow,
Are like sapless leaflets now
Frozen upon December's bough.
On the beach of a northern sea
Which tempests shake eternally,
As once the wretch there lay to sleep,
Lies a solitary heap,
One white skull and seven dry bones,
On the margin of the stones,
Where a few grey rushes stand,
Boundaries of the sea and land:
Nor is heard one voice of wail
But the sea-mews, as they sail
O'er the billows of the gale;
Or the whirlwind up and down
Howling, like a slaughter'd town,
When a king in glory rides
Through the pomp of fratricides:
Those unburied bones around
There is many a mournful sound;
There is no lament for him,
Like a sunless vapour, dim,
Who once clothed with life and thought
What now moves nor murmurs not.

Ay, many flowering islands lie
In the waters of wide Agony:
To such a one this morn was led
My bark, by soft winds piloted.
'Mid the mountains Euganean,
I stood listening to the pæan
With which the legion'd rooks did hail
The sun's uprise majestical;
Gathering round with wings all hoar,
Through the dewy mist they soar
Like grey shades, till th' eastern heaven
Bursts, and then, as clouds of even,
Fleck'd with fire and azure, lie
In the unfathomable sky,
So their plumes of purple grain,
Starr'd with drops of golden rain,
Gleam above the sunlight woods,
As in silent multitudes
On the morning's fitful gale
Through the broken mist they sail,
And the vapours cloven and gleaming
Follow down the dark steep streaming,
Till all is bright, and clear, and still,
Round the solitary hill.

Beneath is spread like a green sea
The waveless plain of Lombardy,
Bounded by the vaporous air,
Islanded by cities fair;
Underneath day's azure eyes
Ocean's nursling, Venice lies,—
A peopled labyrinth of walls,
Amphitrite's destined halls,
Which her hoary sire now paves
With his blue and beaming waves.
Lo! the sun upsprings behind,
Broad, red, radiant, half-reclined
On the level quivering line
Of the waters crystalline;
And before that chasm of light,
As within a furnace bright,
Column, tower, and dome, and spire,
Shine like obelisks of fire,
Pointing with inconstant motion
From the altar of dark ocean
To the sapphire-tinted skies;
As the flames of sacrifice
From the marble shrines did rise,
As to pierce the dome of gold
Where Apollo spoke of old.

Sun-girt City! thou hast been
Ocean's child, and then his queen;
Now is come a darker day,
And thou soon must be his prey,
If the power that raised thee here
Hallow so thy watery bier.
A less drear ruin then than now,
With thy conquest-branded brow
Stooping to the slave of slaves
From thy throne, among the waves
Wilt thou be, when the sea-mew
Flies, as once before it flew,
O'er thine isles depopulate,
And all is in its ancient state,
Save where many a palace-gate
With green sea-flowers overgrown
Like a rock of ocean's own,
Topples o'er the abandon'd sea
As the tides change sullenly.
The fisher on his watery way,
Wandering at the close of day,
Will spread his sail and seize his oar
Till he pass the gloomy shore,
Lest thy dead should, from their sleep
Bursting o'er the starlight deep,
Lead a rapid masque of death
O'er the waters of his path.

Those who alone thy towers behold
Quivering through aërial gold,
As I now behold them here,
Would imagine not they were
Sepulchres, where human forms,
Like pollution-nourish'd worms
To the corpse of greatness cling,
Murder'd, and now mouldering:

But if Freedom should awake
In her omnipotence, and shake
From the Celtic Anarch's hold
All the keys of dungeons cold,
Where a hundred cities lie
Chain'd like thee, ingloriously,
Thou and all thy sister band
Might adorn this sunny land,
Twining memories of old time
With new virtues more sublime;
If not, perish thou and they,
Clouds which stain truth's rising day
By her sun consumed away,
Earth can spare ye: while like flowers,
In the waste of years and hours,
From your dust new nations spring
With more kindly blossoming.

Perish! let there only be
Floating o'er thy hearthless sea,
As the garment of thy sky
Clothes the world immortally,
One remembrance, more sublime
Than the tatter'd pall of Time,
Which scarce hides thy visage wan;
That a tempest-cleaving swan
Of the songs of Albion,
Driven from his ancestral streams
By the might of evil dreams,
Found a nest in thee; and Ocean
Welcomed him with such emotion
That its joy grew his, and sprung
From his lips like music flung
O'er a mighty thunder-fit,
Chastening terror: what though yet
Poesy's unfailing river,
Which through Albion winds for ever,
Lashing with melodious wave
Many a sacred poet's grave,
Mourn its latest nursling fled!
What though thou with all thy dead
Scarce can for this fame repay
Aught thine own,—oh, rather say,
Though thy sins and slaveries foul
Overcloud a sunlike soul!
As the ghost of Homer clings
Round Scamander's wasting springs;
As divinest Shakspeare's might
Fills Avon and the world with light
Like omniscient power, which he
Imaged 'mid mortality;
As the love from Petrarch's urn,
Yet amid yon hills doth burn,
A quenchless lamp, by which the heart
Sees things unearthly; so thou art,
Mighty spirit: so shall be
The city that did refuge thee.

Lo, the sun floats up the sky
Like thought-winged Liberty,
Till the universal light
Seems to level plain and height;
From the sea a mist has spread,
And the beams of morn lie dead
On the towers of Venice now,
Like its glory long ago.

By the skirts of that grey cloud
Many-domed Padua proud
Stands, a peopled solitude,
'Mid the harvest shining plain,
Where the peasant heaps his grain
In the garner of his foe,
And the milk-white oxen slow
With the purple vintage strain,
Heap'd upon the creaking wain,
That the brutal Celt may swill
Drunken sleep with savage will;
And the sickle to the sword
Lies unchanged, though many a lord,
Like a weed whose shade is poison,
Overgrows this region's foison,
Sheaves of whom are ripe to come
To destruction's harvest-home:
Men must reap the things they sow,
Force from force must ever flow,
Or worse; but 't is a bitter woe
That love or reason cannot change
The despot's rage, the slave's revenge.

Padua, thou within whose walls
Those mute guests at festivals,
Son and Mother, Death and Sin,
Play'd at dice for Ezzelin,
Till Death cried, « I win, I win! »
And Sin cursed to lose the wager,
But Death promised, to assuage her,
That he would petition for
Her to be made Vice-Emperor,
When the destined years were o'er,
Over all between the Po
And the eastern Alpine snow,
Under the mighty Austrian.
Sin smiled so as Sin only can,
And since that time, ay, long before,
Both have ruled from shore to shore,
That incestuous pair, who follow
Tyrants as the sun the swallow,
As Repentance follows Crime,
And as changes follow Time.

In thine halls the lamp of learning,
Padua, now no more is burning;
Like a meteor, whose wild way
Is lost over the grave of day,
It gleams betray'd and to betray:
Once remotest nations came
To adore that sacred flame,
When it lit not many a hearth
On this cold and gloomy earth;
Now new fires from antique light
Spring beneath the wide world's might;
But their spark lies dead in thee,
Trampled out by tyranny.
As the Norway woodman quells,
In the depth of piny dells,
One light flame among the brakes,
While the boundless forest shakes,
And its mighty trunks are torn
By the fire thus lowly born;
The spark beneath his feet is dead,
He starts to see the flames it fed

Howling through the darken'd sky
With a myriad tongues victoriously,
And sinks down in fear: so thou,
O tyranny! beholdest now
Light around thee, and thou hearest
The loud flames ascend, and fearest:
Grovel on the earth; ay, hide
In the dust thy purple pride!

Noon descends around me now:
'T is the noon of autumn's glow,
When a soft and purple mist
Like a vaporous amethyst,
Or an air-dissolved star
Mingling light and fragrance, far
From the curved horizon's bound
To the point of heaven's profound,
Fills the overflowing sky;
And the plains that silent lie
Underneath, the leaves unsodden
Where the infant frost has trodden
With his morning-winged feet,
Whose bright print is gleaming yet;
And the red and golden vines,
Piercing with their trellis'd lines
The rough, dark-skirted wilderness;
The dun and bladed grass no less,
Pointing from this hoary tower
In the windless air; the flower
Glimmering at my feet; the line
Of the olive-sandall'd Apennine
In the south dimly islanded;
And the Alps, whose snows are spread
High between the clouds and sun;
And of living things each one;
And my spirit, which so long
Darken'd this swift stream of song,
Interpenetrated lie
By the glory of the sky;
Be it love, light, harmony,
Odour, or the soul of all
Which from heaven like dew doth fall,
Or the mind which feeds this verse
Peopling the lone universe.

Noon descends, and after noon
Autumn's evening meets me soon,
Leading the infantine moon,
And that one star, which to her
Almost seems to minister
Half the crimson light she brings
From the sunset's radiant springs:
And the soft dreams of the morn
(Which like winged winds had borne
To that silent isle, which lies
'Mid remember'd agonies,
The frail bark of this lone being),
Pass, to other sufferers fleeing,
And its ancient pilot, Pain,
Sits beside the helm again.

Other flowering isles must be
In the sea of life and agony:
Other spirits float and flee
O'er that gulf: even now, perhaps,
On some rock the wild wave wraps,
With folded wings they waiting sit
For my bark, to pilot it
To some calm and blooming cove,
Where for me, and those I love,
May a windless bower be built,
Far from passion, pain, and guilt,
In a dell 'mid lawny hills,
Which the wild sea-murmur fills,
And soft sunshine, and the sound
Of old forests echoing round,
And the light and smell divine
Of all flowers that breathe and shine.
We may live so happy there,
That the spirits of the air,
Envying us, may even entice
To our healing paradise
The polluting multitude;
But their rage would be subdued
By that clime divine and calm,
And the winds whose wings rain balm
On the uplifted soul, and leaves
Under which the bright sea heaves;
While each breathless interval
In their whisperings musical
The inspired soul supplies
With its own deep melodies,
And the love which heals all strife
Circling, like the breath of life,
All things in that sweet abode
With its own mild brotherhood.
They, not it would change; and soon
Every sprite beneath the moon
Would repent its envy vain,
And the earth grow young again.

LETTER TO ———.

Leghorn, July 1, 1820.

The spider spreads her webs, whether she be
In poet's tower, cellar, or barn, or tree;
The silkworm in the dark green mulberry-leaves
His winding sheet and cradle ever weaves;
So I, a thing whom moralists call worm,
Sit spinning still round this decaying form,
From the fine threads of rare and subtle thought—
No net of words in garish colours wrought
To catch the idle buzzers of the day—
But a soft cell, where, when that fades away,
Memory may clothe in wings my living name,
And feed it with the asphodels of fame,
Which in those hearts which most remember me
Grow, making love an immortality.

Whoever should behold me now, I wist,
Would think I were a mighty mechanist,
Bent with sublime Archimedean art
To breathe a soul into the iron heart
Of some machine portentous, or strange gin,
Which by the force of figured spells might win
Its way over the sea, and sport therein;
For round the walls are hung dread engines, such
As Vulcan never wrought for Jove to clutch
Ixion or the Titan:—or the quick
Wit of that man of God, St Dominic,
To convince Atheist, Turk, or Heretic;

Or those in philosophic councils met,
Who thought to pay some interest for the debt
They owed * * * * * * * * * * *
By giving a faint foretaste of damnation
To Shakspeare, Sidney, Spenser and the rest
Who made our land an island of the blest,
When lamp-like Spain, who now relumes her fire
On Freedom's hearth, grew dim with Empire:—
With thumbscrews, wheels, with tooth and spike and jag,
Which fishes found under the utmost crag
Of Cornwall and the storm-encompass'd isles,
Where to the sky the rude sea seldom smiles
Unless in treacherous wrath, as on the morn
When the exulting elements in scorn
Satiated with destroy'd destruction, lay
Sleeping in beauty on their mangled prey,
As panthers sleep: and other strange and dread
Magical forms the brick floor overspread——
Proteus transform'd to metal did not make
More figures, or more strange; nor did he take
Such shapes of unintelligible brass,
Or heap himself in such a horrid mass
Of tin and iron not to be understood,
And forms of unimaginable wood,
To puzzle Tubal Cain and all his brood:
Great screws, and cones, and wheels, and grooved blocks,
The elements of what will stand the shocks
Of wave and wind and time.—Upon the table
More knacks and quips there be than I am able
To catalogize in this verse of mine:—
A pretty bowl of wood—not full of wine,
But quicksilver; that dew which the gnomes drink
When at their subterranean toil they swink,
Pledging the demons of the earthquake, who
Reply to them in lava-cry, halloo!
And call out to the cities o'er their head,—
Roofs, towns and shrines,—the dying and the dead
Crash through the chinks of earth—and then all quaff
Another rouse, and hold their sides and laugh.
This quicksilver no gnome has drunk—within
The walnut bowl it lies, vein'd and thin,
In colour like the wake of light that stains
The Tuscan deep, when from the moist moon rains
The inmost shower of its white fire—the breeze
Is still—blue heaven smiles over the pale seas.
And in this bowl of quicksilver—for I
Yield to the impulse of an infancy
Outlasting manhood—I have made to float
A rude idealism of a paper boat—
A hollow screw with cogs—Henry will know
The thing I mean and laugh at me,—if so
He fears not I should do more mischief.—Next
Lie bills and calculations much perplext,
With steam-boats, frigates, and machinery quaint
Traced over them in blue and yellow paint.
Then comes a range of mathematical
Instruments, for plans nautical and statical,
A heap of rosin, a green broken glass
With ink in it;—a china cup that was
What it will never be again, I think,
A thing from which sweet lips were wont to drink
The liquor doctors rail at—and which I
Will quaff in spite of them—and when we die
We 'll toss up who died first of drinking tea,
And cry out,—heads or tails? where'er we be.
Near that a dusty paint-box, some old hooks,
An half-burnt match, an ivory block, three books,
Where conic sections, spherics, logarithms,
To great Laplace, from Saunderson and Sims,
Lie heap'd in their harmonious disarray
Of figures,—disentangle them who may.
Baron de Tott's Memoirs beside them lie,
And some odd volumes of old chemistry.
Near them a most inexplicable thing,
With least in the middle—I 'm conjecturing
How to make Henry understand;—but—no,
I 'll leave, as Spenser says, with many mo,
This secret in the pregnant womb of time,
Too vast a matter for so weak a rhyme.

And here like some weird Archimage sit I,
Plotting dark spells, and devilish enginery,
The self-impelling steam-wheels of the mind
Which pump up oaths from clergymen, and grind
The gentle spirit of our meek reviews
Into a powdery foam of salt abuse,
Ruffling the ocean of their self content;
I sit—and smile or sigh as is my bent,
But not for them—Libeccio rushes round
With an inconstant and an idle sound;
I heed him more than them—the thunder-smoke
Is gathering on the mountains, like a cloak
Folded athwart their shoulders broad and bare;
The ripe corn under the undulating air
Undulates like an ocean;—and the vines
Are trembling wide in all their trellis'd lines—
The murmur of the awakening sea doth fill
The empty pauses of the blast;—the hill
Looks hoary through the white electric rain,
And from the glens beyond, in sullen strain
The interrupted thunder howls; above
One chasm of heaven smiles, like the age of love
On the unquiet world;—while such things are,
How could one worth your friendship heed the war
Of worms? The shriek of the world's carrion jays,
Their censure, or their wonder, or their praise?

You are not here! the quaint witch Memory sees
In vacant chairs, your absent images,
And points where once you sat, and now should be,
But are not.—I demand if ever we
Shall meet as then we met;—and she replies,
Veiling in awe her second-sighted eyes;
"I know the past alone—but summon home
My sister Hope, she speaks of all to come."
But I, an old diviner, who know well
Every false verse of that sweet oracle,
Turn'd to the sad enchantress once again,
And sought a respite from my gentle pain,
In acting every passage o'er and o'er
Of our communion.—How on the sea-shore
We watch'd the ocean and the sky together,
Under the roof of blue Italian weather;
How I ran home through last year's thunder-storm,
And felt the transverse lightning linger warm
Upon my cheek:—and how we often made
Treats for each other, where good-will outweigh'd
The frugal luxury of our country cheer,
As it well might, were it less firm and clear

Than ours must ever be;—and how we spun
A shroud of talk to hide us from the sun
Of this familiar life, which seems to be
But is not,—or is but quaint mockery
Of all we would believe; or sadly blame
The jarring and inexplicable frame
Of this wrong world:—and then anatomize
The purposes and thoughts of men whose eyes
Were closed in distant years;—or widely guess
The issue of the earth's great business,
When we shall be as we no longer are;
Like babbling gossips safe, who hear the war
Of winds, and sigh, but tremble not; or how
You listen'd to some interrupted flow
Of visionary rhyme;—in joy and pain
Struck from the inmost fountains of my brain,
With little skill perhaps;—or how we sought
Those deepest wells of passion or of thought
Wrought by wise poets in the waste of years,
Staining the sacred waters with our tears;
Quenching a thirst ever to be renew'd!
Or how I, wisest lady! then indued
The language of a land which now is free,
And, wing'd with thoughts of truth and majesty,
Flits round the tyrant's sceptre like a cloud,
And bursts the peopled prisons, and cries aloud,
« My name is Legion!»—that majestic tongue
Which Calderon over the desert flung
Of ages and of nations; and which found
An echo in our hearts, and with the sound
Startled oblivion;—thou wert then to me
As is a nurse—when inarticulately
A child would talk as its grown parents do.
If living winds the rapid clouds pursue,
If hawks chase doves through the aerial way,
Huntsmen the innocent deer, and beasts their prey,
Why should not we rouse with the spirit's blast
Out of the forest of the pathless past
These recollected pleasures?

You are now
In London, that great sea, whose ebb and flow
At once is deaf and loud, and on the shore
Vomits its wrecks, and still howls on for more.
Yet in its depth what treasures! You will see
* * * * * * * *
You will see C——; he who sits obscure
In the exceeding lustre and the pure
Intense irradiation of a mind,
Which, with its own internal lustre blind,
Flags wearily through darkness and despair—
A cloud-encircled meteor of the air,
A hooded eagle among blinking owls.
You will see H—t; one of those happy souls
Which are the salt of the earth, and without whom
This world would smell like what it is—a tomb;
Who is, what others seem;—his room no doubt
Is still adorn'd by many a cast from Shout,
With graceful flowers, tastefully placed about;
And coronals of bay from riband hung,
And brighter wreaths in neat disorder flung,
The gifts of the most learn'd among some dozens
Of female friends, sisters-in-law and cousins.
And there is he with his eternal puns,
Which beat the dullest brain for smiles, like duns
Thundering for money at a poet's door;
Alas! it is no use to say, « I'm poor!»
Or oft in graver mood, when he will look
Things wiser than were ever said in book,
Except in Shakspeare's wisest tenderness.
You will see H—, and I cannot express
His virtues, though I know that they are great,
Because he locks, then barricades, the gate
Within which they inhabit;—of his wit
And wisdom, you 'll cry out when you are bit.
He is a pearl within an oyster shell,
One of the richest of the deep. And there
Is English P— with his mountain Fair
Turn'd into a Flamingo,—that shy bird
That gleams i' the Indian air. Have you not heard
When a man marries, dies, or turns Hindoo,
His best friends hear no more of him? but you
Will see him and will like him too, I hope,
With the milk-white Snowdonian Antelope
Match'd with this cameleopard; his fine wit
Makes such a wound, the knife is lost in it;
A strain too learned for a shallow age,
Too wise for selfish bigots;—let his page
Which charms the chosen spirits of the age,
Fold itself up for a serener clime
Of years to come, and find its recompense
In that just expectation. Wit and sense,
Virtue and human knowledge, all that might
Make this dull world a business of delight,
Are all combined in H. S.—And these,
With some exceptions, which I need not tease
Your patience by descanting on, are all
You and I know in London.

I recal
My thoughts and bid you look upon the night.
As water does a sponge, so the moonlight
Fills the void, hollow, universal air.
What see you?—Unpavilion'd heaven is fair,
Whether the moon, into her chamber gone,
Leaves midnight to the golden stars, or wan
Climbs with diminish'd beams the azure steep;
Or whether clouds sail o'er the inverse deep,
Piloted by the many wandering blast,
And the rare stars rush through them, dim and fast.
All this is beautiful in every land.
But what see you beside? A shabby stand
Of hackney-coaches—a brick house or wall,
Fencing some lonely court, white with the scrawl
Of our unhappy politics;—or worse—
A wretched woman reeling by, whose curse
Mix'd with the watchman's, partner of her trade,
You must accept in place of serenade—
I see a chaos of green leaves and fruit
Built round dark caverns, even to the root
Of the living stems who feed them; in whose bowers
There sleep in their dark dew the folded flowers;
Beyond, the surface of the unsickled corn
Trembles not in the slumbering air, and borne
In circles quaint, and ever-changing dance,
Like winged stars the fire-flies flash and glance
Pale in the open moonshine; but each one
Under the dark trees seems a little sun,
A meteor tamed; a fix'd star gone astray
From the silver regions of the milky way.

Afar the Contadino's song is heard,
Rude, but made sweet by distance;—and a bird
Which cannot be a nightingale, and yet
I know none else that sing so sweet as it
At this late hour;—and then all is still:—
Now Italy or London, which you will!

Next winter you must pass with me; I 'll have
My house by that time turn'd into a grave
Of dead despondence and low-thoughted care,
And all the dreams which our tormentors are.
Oh that H———— and —— were there,
With every thing belonging to them fair!—
We will have books; Spanish, Italian, Greek,

* * * * * *

* * * * * * *

Though we eat little flesh and drink no wine,
Yet let 's be merry: we 'll have tea and toast;
Custards for supper, and an endless host
Of syllabubs and jellies and mince-pies,
And other such lady-like luxuries,—
Feasting on which we will philosophise.
And we 'll have fires out of the Grand Duke's wood,
To thaw the six weeks' winter in our blood.
And then we 'll talk;—what shall we talk about?
Oh! there are themes enough for many a bout
Of thought-entangled descant;—as to nerves,
With cones and parallelograms and curves,
I 've sworn to strangle them if once they dare
To bother me,—when you are with me there.
And they shall never more sip laud'num
From Helicon or Himeros;[1]—we 'll come
And in despite of *** and of the devil,
Will make our friendly philosophic revel
Outlast the leafless time;—till buds and flowers
Warn the obscure, inevitable hours
Sweet meeting by sad parting to renew;—
« To-morrow to fresh woods and pastures new. »

THE SENSITIVE PLANT.

PART I.

A Sensitive Plant in a garden grew,
And the young winds fed it with silver dew,
And it open'd its fan-like leaves to the light,
And closed them beneath the kisses of night.

And the Spring arose on the garden fair,
Like the Spirit of Love felt every where;
And each flower and herb on Earth's dark breast
Rose from the dreams of its wintry rest.

But none ever trembled and panted with bliss
In the garden, the field, or the wilderness,
Like a doe in the noon-tide with love's sweet want,
As the companionless Sensitive Plant.

The snow-drop, and then the violet,
Arose from the ground with warm rain wet,
And their breath was mix'd with fresh odour, sent
From the turf, like the voice and the instrument.

Then the pied wind-flowers and the tulip tall,
And narcissi, the fairest among them all,
Who gaze on their eyes in the stream's recess,
Till they die of their own dear loveliness;

And the Naiad-like lily of the vale,
Whom youth makes so fair and passion so pale,
That the light of its tremulous bells is seen
Through their pavilions of tender green;

And the hyacinth purple, and white, and blue,
Which flung from its bells a sweet peal anew
Of music so delicate, soft, and intense,
It was felt like an odour within the sense;

And the rose like a nymph to the bath addrest,
Which unveil'd the depth of her glowing breast,
Till, fold after fold, to the fainting air
The soul of her beauty and love lay bare:

And the wand-like lily, which lifted up,
As a Mænad, its moonlight-colour'd cup,
Till the fiery star, which is its eye,
Gazed through clear dew on the tender sky;

And the jessamine faint, and the sweet tuberose,
The sweetest flower for scent that blows;
And all rare blossoms from every clime
Grew in that garden in perfect prime.

And on the stream whose inconstant bosom
Was prankt under boughs of embowering blossom,
With golden and green light, slanting through
Their heaven of many a tangled hue,

Broad water-lilies lay tremulously,
And starry river-buds glimmer'd by,
And around them the soft stream did glide and dance
With a motion of sweet sound and radiance.

And the sinuous paths of lawn and of moss,
Which led through the garden along and across,
Some open at once to the sun and the breeze,
Some lost among bowers of blossoming trees,

Were all paved with daisies and delicate bells
As fair as the fabulous asphodels,
And flowrets which drooping as day droop'd too,
Fell into pavilions, white, purple, and blue,
To roof the glow-worm from the evening dew.

And from this undefiled Paradise
The flowers (as an infant's awakening eyes
Smile on its mother, whose singing sweet
Can first lull, and at last must awaken it),

When Heaven's blithe winds had unfolded them,
As mine-lamps enkindle a hidden gem,
Shone smiling to Heaven, and every one
Shared joy in the light of the gentle sun;

For each one was interpenetrated
With the light and the odour its neighbour shed,
Like young lovers whom youth and love make dear,
Wrapp'd and fill'd by their mutual atmosphere.

[1] Ἵμερος, from which the river Himera was named, is, with some slight shade of difference, a synonyme of Love.

But the Sensitive Plant which could give small fruit
Of the love which it felt from the leaf to the root,
Received more than all, it loved more than ever,
Where none wanted but it, could belong to the giver—

For the Sensitive Plant has no bright flower;
Radiance and odour are not its dower;
It loves, even like Love, its deep heart is full,
It desires what it has not, the beautiful!

The light winds which from unsustaining wings
Shed the music of many murmurings;
The beams which dart from many a star
Of the flowers whose hues they bear afar;

The plumed insects swift and free,
Like golden boats on a sunny sea,
Laden with light and odour, which pass
Over the gleam of the living grass;

The unseen clouds of the dew, which lie
Like fire in the flowers till the sun rides high,
Then wander like spirits among the spheres,
Each cloud faint with the fragrance it bears;

The quivering vapours of dim noontide,
Which like a sea o'er the warm earth glide,
In which every sound, and odour, and beam,
Move, as reeds in a single stream;

Each and all like ministering angels were
For the Sensitive Plant sweet joy to bear,
Whilst the lagging hours of the day went by
Like windless clouds o'er a tender sky.

And when evening descended from heaven above,
And the Earth was all rest, and the air was all love,
And delight, though less bright, was far more deep,
And the day's veil fell from the world of sleep,

And the beasts, and the birds, and the insects were drown'd
In an ocean of dreams without a sound;
Whose waves never mark, though they ever impress
The light sand which paves it, consciousness;

(Only over head the sweet nightingale
Ever sang more sweet as the day might fail,
And snatches of its Elysian chant
Were mix'd with the dreams of the Sensitive Plant.)

The Sensitive Plant was the earliest
Up-gather'd into the bosom of rest;
A sweet child weary of its delight,
The feeblest and yet the favourite,
Cradled within the embrace of night.

PART II.

There was a Power in this sweet place,
An Eve in this Eden; a ruling grace
Which to the flowers, did they waken or dream,
Was as God is to the starry scheme.

A Lady, the wonder of her kind,
Whose form was upborne by a lovely mind
Which, dilating, had moulded her mien and motion
Like a sea-flower unfolded beneath the ocean,

Tended the garden from morn to even:
And the meteors of that sublunar heaven,
Like the lamps of the air when night walks forth,
Laugh'd round her footsteps up from the Earth!

She had no companion of mortal race,
But her tremulous breath and her flushing face
Told, whilst the morn kiss'd the sleep from her eyes,
That her dreams were less slumber than Paradise:

As if some bright Spirit for her sweet sake
Had deserted heaven while the stars were awake,
As if yet around her he lingering were,
Though the veil of daylight conceal'd him from her.

Her step seem'd to pity the grass it prest;
You might hear by the heaving of her breast,
That the coming and going of the wind
Brought pleasure there and left passion behind.

And wherever her airy footstep trod,
Her trailing hair from the grassy sod
Erased its light vestige, with shadowy sweep,
Like a sunny storm o'er the dark green deep.

I doubt not the flowers of that garden sweet
Rejoiced in the sound of her gentle feet;
I doubt not they felt the spirit that came
From her glowing fingers through all their frame.

She sprinkled bright water from the stream
On those that were faint with the sunny beam;
And out of the cups of the heavy flowers
She emptied the rain of the thunder showers.

She lifted their heads with her tender hands,
And sustain'd them with rods and ozier bands;
If the flowers had been her own infants, she
Could never have nursed them more tenderly.

And all killing insects and gnawing worms,
And things of obscene and unlovely forms,
She bore in a basket of Indian woof,
Into the rough woods far aloof,

In a basket, of grasses and wild flowers full,
The freshest her gentle hands could pull
For the poor banish'd insects, whose intent,
Although they did ill, was innocent.

But the bee and the beamlike ephemeris,
Whose path is the lightning's, and soft moths that kiss
The sweet lips of the flowers, and harm not, did she
Make her attendant angels be.

And many an antenatal tomb,
Where butterflies dream of the life to come,
She left clinging round the smooth and dark
Edge of the odorous cedar bark.

This fairest creature from earliest spring
Thus moved through the garden ministering
All the sweet season of summer tide,
And ere the first leaf look'd brown—she died!

PART III.

Three days the flowers of the garden fair,
Like stars when the moon is awaken'd, were,
Or the waves of Baiæ, ere luminous
She floats up through the smoke of Vesuvius.

And on the fourth, the Sensitive Plant
Felt the sound of the funeral chaunt,
And the steps of the bearers, heavy and slow,
And the sobs of the mourners deep and low;

The weary sound and the heavy breath,
And the silent motions of passing death,
And the smell, cold, oppressive, and dank,
Sent through the pores of the coffin plank;

The dark grass, and the flowers among the grass,
Were bright with tears as the crowd did pass;
From their sighs the wind caught a mournful tone,
And sate in the pines, and gave groan for groan.

The garden, once fair, became cold and foul,
Like the corpse of her who had been its soul;
Which at first was lovely as if in sleep,
Then slowly changed, till it grew a heap
To make men tremble who never weep.

Swift summer into the autumn flow'd,
And frost in the mist of the morning rode,
Though the noon-day sun look'd clear and bright,
Mocking the spoil of the secret night.

The rose leaves, like flakes of crimson now,
Paved the turf and the moss below.
The lilies were drooping, and white, and wan,
Like the head and the skin of a dying man.

And Indian plants, of scent and hue
The sweetest that ever were fed on dew,
Leaf after leaf, day after day,
Were mass'd into the common clay.

And the leaves, brown, yellow, and grey, and red,
And white with the whiteness of what is dead,
Like troops of ghosts on the dry wind past;
Their whistling noise made the birds aghast.

And the gusty winds waked the winged seeds,
Out of their birth-place of ugly weeds,
Till they clung round many a sweet flower's stem,
Which rotted into the earth with them.

The water-blooms under the rivulet
Fell from the stalks on which they were set;
And the eddies drove them here and there,
As the winds did those of the upper air.

Then the rain came down, and the broken stalks,
Were bent and tangled across the walks;
And the leafless net-work of parasite bowers
Mass'd into ruin, and all sweet flowers.

Between the time of the wind and the snow,
All loathliest weeds began to grow,
Whose coarse leaves were splash'd with many a speck,
Like the water-snake's belly and the toad's back.

And thistles, and nettles, and darnels rank,
And the dock, and henbane, and hemlock dank,
Stretch'd out its long and hollow shank,
And stifled the air till the dead wind stank.

And plants, at whose names the verse feels loath,
Fill'd the place with a monstrous undergrowth,
Prickly, and pulpous, and blistering, and blue,
Livid, and starr'd with a lurid dew.

And agarics and fungi, with mildew and mould,
Started like mist from the wet ground cold;
Pale, fleshy, as if the decaying dead
With a spirit of growth had been animated!

Their mass rotted off them, flake by flake,
Till the thick stalk stuck like a murderer's stake;
Where rags of loose flesh yet tremble on high,
Infecting the winds that wander by.

Spawn, weeds, and filth, a leprous scum,
Made the running rivulet thick and dumb,
And at its outlet, flags huge as stakes
Damn'd it up with roots knotted like water-snakes.

And hour by hour, when the air was still,
The vapours arose which have strength to kill:
At morn they were seen, at noon they were felt,
At night they were darkness no star could melt.

And unctuous meteors from spray to spray
Crept and flitted in broad noon-day
Unseen; every branch on which they alit
By a venomous blight was burn'd and bit.

The Sensitive Plant, like one forbid,
Wept, and the tears within each lid
Of its folded leaves, which together grew,
Were changed to a blight of frozen glue.

For the leaves soon fell, and the branches soon
By the heavy axe of the blast were hewn;
The sap shrank to the root through every pore,
As blood to a heart that will beat no more.

For Winter came: the wind was his whip:
One choppy finger was on his lip:
He had torn the cataracts from the hills,
And they clank'd at his girdle like manacles;

His breath was a chain which without a sound
The earth, and the air, and the water bound;
He came, fiercely driven in his chariot-throne
By the tenfold blasts of the arctic zone.

Then the weeds which were forms of living death
Fled from the frost to the earth beneath.
Their decay and sudden flight from frost
Was but like the vanishing of a ghost!

And under the roots of the Sensitive Plant
The moles and the dormice died for want.
The birds dropp'd stiff from the frozen air,
And were caught in the branches naked and bare.

First there came down a thawing rain,
And its dull drops froze on the boughs again,
Then there steam'd up a freezing dew
Which to the drops of the thaw-rain grew;

And a northern whirlwind, wandering about
Like a wolf that had smelt a dead child out,
Shook the boughs thus laden, and heavy and stiff,
And snapp'd them off with his rigid griff.

When winter had gone and spring came back,
The Sensitive Plant was a leafless wreck;
But the mandrakes, and toad stools, and docks, and darnels,
Rose like the dead from their ruin'd charnels.

CONCLUSION.

Whether the Sensitive Plant, or that
Which within its boughs like a spirit sat
Ere its outward form had known decay,
Now felt this change, I cannot say.

Whether that lady's gentle mind,
No longer with the form combined
Which scatter'd love, as stars do light,
Found sadness, where it left delight,

I dare not guess; but in this life
Of error, ignorance, and strife,
Where nothing is, but all things seem,
And we the shadows of the dream,

It is a modest creed, and yet
Pleasant, if one considers it,
To own that death itself must be,
Like all the rest, a mockery.

That garden sweet, that lady fair,
And all sweet shapes and odours there,
In truth have never pass'd away:
'T is we, 't is ours, are changed; not they.

For love, and beauty, and delight,
There is no death nor change: their might
Exceeds our organs, which endure
No light, being themselves obscure.

A VISION OF THE SEA.

'T is the terror of tempest. The rags of the sail
Are flickering in ribbons within the fierce gale:
From the stark night of vapours the dim rain is driven,
And when lightning is loosed, like a deluge from heaven,
She sees the black trunks of the water-spouts spin,
And bend, as if heaven was mining in,
Which they seem'd to sustain with their terrible mass
As if ocean had sunk from beneath them: they pass
To their graves in the deep with an earthquake of sound,
And the waves and the thunders, made silent around,
Leave the wind to its echo. The vessel, now toss'd
Through the low-trailing rack of the tempest, is lost
In the skirts of the thunder-cloud: now down the sweep
Of the wind-cloven wave to the chasm of the deep
It sinks, and the walls of the watery vale
Whose depths of dread calm are unmoved by the gale,
Dim mirrors of ruin hang gleaming about;
While the surf, like a chaos of stars, like a rout
Of death-flames, like whirlpools of fire-flowing iron,
With splendour and terror the black ship environ;
Or like sulphur-flakes hurl'd from a mine of pale fire,
In fountains spout o'er it. In many a spire
The pyramid-billows, with white points of brine,
In the cope of the lightning inconstantly shine,
As piercing the sky from the floor of the sea.
The great ship seems splitting! it cracks as a tree,
While an earthquake is splintering its root, ere the blast
Of the whirlwind that stript it of branches has past.
The intense thunder-balls which are raining from heaven
Have shatter'd its mast, and it stands black and riven.
The chinks suck destruction. The heavy dead hulk
On the living sea rolls an inanimate bulk,
Like a corpse on the clay which is hung'ring to fold
Its corruption around it. Meanwhile, from the hold,
One deck is burst up from the waters below,
And it splits like the ice when the thaw-breezes blow
O'er the lakes of the desert! Who sit on the other?
Is that all the crew that lie burying each other,
Like the dead in a breach, round the foremast? Are those
Twin tigers, who burst, when the waters arose,
In the agony of terror, their chains in the hold
(What now makes them tame, is what then made them bold);
Who crouch, side by side, and have driven, like a crank,
The deep grip of their claws through the vibrating plank?
Are these all? Nine weeks the tall vessel had lain
On the windless expanse of the watery plain,
Where the death-darting sun cast no shadow at noon,
And there seem'd to be fire in the beams of the moon,
Till a lead-colour'd fog gather'd up from the deep,
Whose breath was quick pestilence; then, the cold sleep
Crept, like blight through the ears of a thick field of corn,
O'er the populous vessel. And even and morn,
With their hammocks for coffins the seamen aghast
Like dead men the dead limbs of their comrades cast
Down the deep, which closed on them above and around,
And the sharks and the dog-fish their grave-clothes unbound,
And were glutted like Jews with this manna rain'd down
From God on their wilderness. One after one
The mariners died; on the eve of this day,
When the tempest was gathering in cloudy array,
But seven remain'd. Six the thunder had smitten,
And they lie black as mummies on which Time has written
His scorn of the embalmer; the seventh, from the deck
An oak splinter pierced through his breast and his back,
And hung out to the tempest, a wreck on the wreck.
No more? At the helm sits a woman more fair
Than heaven, when, unbinding its star-braided hair,
It sinks with the sun on the earth and the sea.
She clasps a bright child on her upgather'd knee,
It laughs at the lightning, it mocks the mix'd thunder
Of the air and the sea, with desire and with wonder
It is beckoning the tigers to rise and come near,
It would play with those eyes where the radiance of fear
Is outshining the meteors; its bosom beats high,
The heart-fire of pleasure has kindled its eye;
Whilst its mother's is lustreless. 'Smile not, my child,
But sleep deeply and sweetly, and so be beguiled

Of the pang that awaits us, whatever that be,
So dreadful since thou must divide it with me!
Dream, sleep! This pale bosom, thy cradle and bed,
Will it rock thee not, infant? 'T is beating with dread!
Alas! what is life, what is death, what are we,
That when the ship sinks we no longer may be?
What! to see thee no more, and to feel thee no more?
To be after life what we have been before?
Not to touch those sweet hands? Not to look on those eyes,
Those lips, and that hair, all that smiling disguise
Thou yet wearest, sweet spirit, which I, day by day,
Have so long call'd my child, but which now fades away
Like a rainbow, and I the fallen shower?» Lo! the ship
Is settling, it topples, the leeward ports dip;
The tigers leap up when they feel the slow brine
Crawling inch by inch on them; hair, ears, limbs, and eyne,
Stand rigid with horror; a loud, long, hoarse cry
Burst at once from their vitals tremendously,
And 't is borne down the mountainous vale of the wave,
Rebounding, like thunder, from crag to cave,
Mix'd with the clash of the lashing rain,
Hurried on by the might of the hurricane:
The hurricane came from the west, and past on
By the path of the gate of the eastern sun,
Transversely dividing the stream of the storm;
As an arrowy serpent, pursuing the form
Of an elephant, bursts through the brakes of the waste.
Black as a cormorant the screaming blast,
Between ocean and heaven, like an ocean, past,
Till it came to the clouds on the verge of the world
Which, based on the sea and to heaven upcurl'd,
Like columns and walls did surround and sustain
The dome of the tempest; it rent them in twain,
As a flood rends its barriers of mountainous crag:
And the dense clouds in many a ruin and rag,
Like the stones of a temple ere earthquake has past,
Like the dust of its fall, on the whirlwind are cast;
They are scatter'd like foam on the torrent; and where
The wind has burst out through the chasm, from the air
Of clear morning, the beams of the sunrise flow in,
Unimpeded, keen, golden, and crystalline,
Banded armies of light and of air; at one gate
They encounter, but interpenetrate.
And that breach in the tempest is widening away,
And the caverns of cloud are torn up by the day,
And the fierce winds are sinking with weary wings,
Lull'd by the motion and murmurings,
And the long glassy heave of the rocking sea,
And over head glorious, but dreadful to see,
The wrecks of the tempest, like vapours of gold,
Are consuming in sun-rise. The heap'd waves behold
The deep calm of blue heaven dilating above,
And, like passions made still by the presence of Love,
Beneath the clear surface reflecting it slide
Tremulous with soft influence; extending its tide
From the Andes to Atlas, round mountain and isle,
Round sea-birds and wrecks, paved with heaven's azure smile,
The wide world of waters is vibrating. Where
Is the ship? On the verge of the wave where it lay
One tiger is mingled in ghastly affray
With a sea-snake. The foam and the smoke of the battle
Stain the clear air with sun-bows; the jar, and the rattle
Of solid bones crush'd by the infinite stress
Of the snake's adamantine voluminousness;
And the hum of the hot blood that spouts and rains
Where the gripe of the tiger has wounded the veins,
Swollen with rage, strength, and effort; the whirl and the splash
As of some hideous engine whose brazen teeth smash
The thin winds and soft waves into thunder! the screams
And hissings crawl fast o'er the smooth ocean-streams,
Each sound like a centipede. Near this commotion,
A blue shark is hanging within the blue ocean,
The fin-winged tomb of the victor. The other
Is winning his way from the fate of his brother,
To his own with the speed of despair. Lo! a boat
Advances; twelve rowers with the impulse of thought
Urge on the keen keel, the brine foams. At the stern
Three marksmen stand levelling. Hot bullets burn
In the breast of the tiger, which yet bears him on
To his refuge and ruin. One fragment alone,
'T is dwindling and sinking, 't is now almost gone,
Of the wreck of the vessel peers out of the sea.
With her left hand she grasps it impetuously,
With her right she sustains her fair infant. Death, Fear,
Love, Beauty, are mix'd in the atmosphere,
Which trembles and burns with the fervour of dread
Around her wild eyes, her bright hand, and her head,
Like a meteor of light o'er the waters! her child
Is yet smiling, and playing, and murmuring: so smiled
The false deep ere the storm. Like a sister and brother
The child and the ocean still smile on each other,
Whilst———

ODE TO HEAVEN.

CHORUS OF SPIRITS.

FIRST SPIRIT.

Palace-roof of cloudless nights!
Paradise of golden lights!
Deep, immeasurable, vast,
Which art now, and which wert then!
Of the present and the past,
Of the eternal where and when,
Presence-chamber, temple, home,
Ever-canopying dome,
Of acts and ages yet to come!

Glorious shapes have life in thee,
Earth, and all earth's company;
Living globes which ever throng
Thy deep chasms and wildernesses;
And green worlds that glide along;
And swift stars with flashing tresses;
And icy moons most cold and bright,
And mighty suns beyond the night,
Atoms of intensest light.

Even thy name is as a god,
Heaven! for thou art the abode
Of that power which is the glass
Wherein man his nature sees.
Generations as they pass
Worship thee with bended knees.
Their unremaining gods and they
Like a river roll away:
Thou remainest such alway.

SECOND SPIRIT.

Thou art but the mind's first chamber,
Round which its young fancies clamber,
  Like weak insects in a cave,
Lighted up by stalactites;
  But the portal of the grave,
Where a world of new delights
  Will make thy best glories seem
  But a dim and noon-day gleam
  From the shadow of a dream!

THIRD SPIRIT.

Peace! the abyss is wreath'd with scorn
At your presumption, atom-born!
  What is heaven? and what are ye
Who its brief expanse inherit?
  What are suns and spheres which flee
With the instinct of that spirit
  Of which ye are but a part?
  Drops which Nature's mighty heart
  Drives through thinnest veins. Depart!

What is heaven? a globe of dew,
Filling in the morning new
  Some eyed flower, whose young leaves waken
On an unimagined world:
  Constellated suns unshaken,
Orbits measureless, are furl'd
  In that frail and fading sphere,
  With ten millions gather'd there,
  To tremble, gleam, and disappear.

ODE TO THE WEST WIND.[1]

I.

O WILD West-wind! thou breath of Autumn's being!
Thou, from whose unseen presence the leaves dead
Are driven, like ghosts from an enchanter fleeing,

Yellow, and black, and pale, and hectic red,
Pestilence-stricken multitudes: O, thou,
Who chariotest to their dark wintry bed

The winged seeds, where they lie cold and low,
Each like a corpse within its grave, until
Thine azure sister of the spring shall blow

Her clarion o'er the dreaming earth, and fill
(Driving sweet buds like flocks to feed in air)
With living hues and odours, plain and hill:

Wild Spirit, which art moving every where;
Destroyer and preserver; hear, O, hear!

[1] This poem was conceived and chiefly written in a wood that skirts the Arno, near Florence, and on a day when that tempestuous wind, whose temperature is at once mild and animating, was collecting the vapours which pour down the autumnal rains. They began, as I foresaw, at sunset with a violent tempest of hail and rain, attended by that magnificent thunder and lightning peculiar to the Cisalpine regions.

The phenomenon alluded to at the conclusion of the third stanza is well known to naturalists. The vegetation at the bottom of the sea, of rivers, and of lakes, sympathises with that of the land in the change of seasons, and is consequently influenced by the winds which announce it.

II.

Thou on whose stream, 'mid the steep sky's commotion,
Loose clouds like earth's decaying leaves are shed,
Shook from the tangled boughs of Heaven and Ocean,

Angels of rain and lightning: there are spread
On the blue surface of thine airy surge,
Like the bright hair uplifted from the head

Of some fierce Mænad, even from the dim verge
Of the horizon to the zenith's height,
The locks of the approaching storm. Thou dirge

Of the dying year, to which this closing night
Will be the dome of a vast sepulchre,
Vaulted with all thy congregated might

Of vapours, from whose solid atmosphere
Black rain, and fire, and hail will burst: O, hear!

III.

Thou who didst waken from his summer dreams
The blue Mediterranean, where he lay,
Lull'd by the coil of his crystalline streams,

Beside a pumice isle in Baiæ's bay,
And saw in sleep old palaces and towers
Quivering within the wave's intenser day,

All overgrown with azure moss and flowers
So sweet, the sense faints picturing them! Thou,
For whose path the Atlantic's level powers

Cleave themselves into chasms, while far below
The sea-blooms and the oozy woods which wear
The sapless foliage of the ocean, know

Thy voice, and suddenly grow grey with fear,
And tremble and despoil themselves: O, hear!

IV.

If I were a dead leaf thou mightest bear;
If I were a swift cloud to fly with thee;
A wave to pant beneath thy power, and share

The impulse of thy strength, only less free
Than thou, O, uncontrollable! If even
I were as in my boyhood, and could be

The comrade of thy wanderings over heaven,
As then, when to outstrip thy skiey speed
Scarce seem'd a vision; I would ne'er have striven

As thus with thee in prayer in my sore need.
Oh! lift me as a wave, a leaf, a cloud!
I fall upon the thorns of life! I bleed!

A heavy weight of hours has chain'd and bow'd
One too like thee: tameless, and swift, and proud.

V.

Make me thy lyre, even as the forest is:
What if my leaves are falling like its own!
The tumult of thy mighty harmonies

Will take from both a deep, autumnal tone,
Sweet though in sadness. Be thou, spirit fierce,
My spirit! Be thou me, impetuous one!

Drive my dead thoughts over the universe
Like wither'd leaves, to quicken a new birth!
And, by the incantation of this verse,

Scatter, as from an unextinguish'd hearth
Ashes and sparks, my words among mankind!
Be through my lips to unawaken'd earth

The trumpet of a prophecy! O, wind,
If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?

AN ODE,

WRITTEN, OCTOBER, 1819, BEFORE THE SPANIARDS HAD RECOVERED THEIR LIBERTY.

Arise, arise, arise!
There is blood on the earth that denies ye bread;
Be your wounds like eyes
To weep for the dead, the dead, the dead.
What other grief were it just to pay?
Your sons, your wives, your brethren, were they;
Who said they were slain on the battle day?

Awaken, awaken, awaken!
The slave and the tyrant are twin-born foes;
Be the cold chains shaken
To the dust where your kindred repose, repose:
Their bones in the grave will start and move,
When they hear the voices of those they love,
Most loud in the holy combat above.

Wave, wave high the banner!
When freedom is riding to conquest by:
Though the slaves that fan her
Be famine and toil, giving sigh for sigh.
And ye who attend her imperial car,
Lift not your hands in the banded war,
But in her defence whose children ye are.

Glory, glory, glory,
To those who have greatly suffer'd and done!
Never name in story
Was greater than that which ye shall have won.
Conquerors have conquer'd their foes alone,
Whose revenge, pride, and power they have overthrown:
Ride ye, more victorious, over your own.

Bind, bind every brow
With crownals of violet, ivy, and pine:
Hide the blood-stains now
With hues which sweet nature has made divine:
Green strength, azure hope, and eternity:
But let not the pansy among them be;
Ye were injured, and that means memory.

ODE TO LIBERTY.

Yet, Freedom, yet thy banner torn but flying,
Streams like a thunder-storm against the wind.
BYRON.

I.

A GLORIOUS people vibrated again
The lightning of the nations: Liberty
From heart to heart, from tower to tower, o'er Spain,
Scattering contagious fire into the sky,
Gleam'd. My soul spurn'd the chains of its dismay,
And, in the rapid plumes of song,
Clothed itself, sublime and strong;
As a young eagle soars the morning clouds among,
Hovering in verse o'er its accustom'd prey;
Till from its station in the heaven of fame
The Spirit's whirlwind rapt it, and the ray
Of the remotest sphere of living flame
Which paves the void was from behind it flung,
As foam from a ship's swiftness, when there came
A voice out of the deep: I will record the same.

II.

The Sun and the serenest Moon sprang forth:
The burning stars of the abyss were hurl'd
Into the depths of heaven. The dædal earth,
That island in the ocean of the world,
Hung in its cloud of all-sustaining air:
But this divinest universe
Was yet a chaos and a curse,
For thou wert not: but power from worst producing worse,
The spirit of the beasts was kindled there,
And of the birds, and of the watery forms,
And there was war among them, and despair
Within them, raging without truce or terms:
The bosom of their violated nurse
Groan'd, for beasts warr'd on beasts, and worms on worms,
And men on men; each heart was as a hell of storms.

III.

Man, the imperial shape, then multiplied
His generations under the pavilion
Of the Sun's throne: palace and pyramid,
Temple and prison, to many a swarming million,
Were, as to mountain-wolves their ragged caves.
This human living multitude
Was savage, cunning, blind, and rude,
For thou wert not; but o'er the populous solitude,
Like one fierce cloud over a waste of waves,
Hung tyranny; beneath, sate deified
The sister-pest, congregator of slaves;
Into the shadow of her pinions wide,
Anarchs and priests who feed on gold and blood,
Till with the stain their inmost souls are dyed,
Drove the astonish'd herds of men from every side.

IV.

The nodding promontories, and blue isles,
And cloud-like mountains, and dividuous waves
Of Greece, bask'd glorious in the open smiles
Of favouring heaven: from their enchanted caves

Prophetic echoes flung dim melody
On the unapprehensive wild.
The vine, the corn, the olive mild,
Grew savage yet, to human use unreconciled;
And, like unfolded flowers beneath the sea,
Like the man's thought dark in the infant's brain,
Like aught that is which wraps what is to be,
Art's deathless dreams lay veil'd by many a vein
Of Parian stone; and yet a speechless child,
Verse murmur'd, and Philosophy did strain
Her lidless eyes for thee; when o'er the Ægean main

V.

Athens arose: a city such as vision
Builds from the purple crags and silver towers
Of battlemented cloud, as in derision
Of kingliest masonry: the ocean-floors
Pave it; the evening sky pavilions it;
Its portals are inhabited
By thunder-zoned winds, each head
Within its cloudy wings with sun-fire garlanded,
A divine work! Athens diviner yet
Gleam'd with its crest of columns, on the will
Of man, as on a mount of diamond, set;
For thou wert, and thine all-creative skill
Peopled with forms that mock the eternal dead
In marble immortality, that hill
Which was thine earliest throne and latest oracle.

VI.

Within the surface of Time's fleeting river
Its wrinkled image lies, as then it lay
Immovably unquiet, and for ever
It trembles, but it cannot pass away!
The voices of thy bards and sages thunder
With an earth-awakening blast
Through the caverns of the past;
Religion veils her eyes; Oppression shrinks aghast:
A winged sound of joy, and love, and wonder,
Which soars where Expectation never flew,
Rending the veil of space and time asunder!
One ocean feeds the clouds, and streams, and dew;
One sun illumines heaven; one spirit vast
With life and love makes chaos ever new,
As Athens doth the world with thy delight renew.

VII.

Then Rome was, and from thy deep bosom fairest,
Like a wolf-cub from a Cadmæan Mænad,[1]
She drew the milk of greatness, though thy dearest
From that Elysian food was yet unweaned;
And many a deed of terrible uprightness
By thy sweet love was sanctified;
And in thy smile, and by thy side,
Saintly Camillus lived, and firm Atilius died.
But when tears stain'd thy robe of vestal whiteness,
And gold prophaned thy capitolian throne,
Thou didst desert, with spirit-winged lightness,
The senate of the tyrants: they sunk prone
Slaves of one tyrant: Palatinus sigh'd
Faint echoes of Ionian song; that tone
Thou didst delay to hear, lamenting to disown.

[1] See the Bacchæ of Euripides.

VIII.

From what Hyrcanian glen or frozen hill,
Or piny promontory of the Arctic main,
Or utmost islet inaccessible,
Didst thou lament the ruin of thy reign,
Teaching the woods and waves, and desert rocks,
And every Naiad's ice-cold urn,
To talk in echoes sad and stern,
Of that sublimest lore which man had dared unlearn?
For neither didst thou watch the wizard flocks
Of the Scald's dreams, nor haunt the Druid's sleep.
What if the tears rain'd through thy shatter'd locks
Were quickly dried? for thou didst groan, not weep,
When from its sea of death to kill and burn,
The Galilean serpent forth did creep,
And made thy world an undistinguishable heap.

IX.

A thousand years the Earth cried, Where art thou?
And then the shadow of thy coming fell
On Saxon Alfred's olive-cinctured brow:
And many a warrior-peopled citadel,
Like rocks which fire lifts out of the flat deep,
Arose in sacred Italy,
Frowning o'er the tempestuous sea
Of kings, and priests, and slaves, in tower-crown'd majesty;
That multitudinous anarchy did sweep,
And burst around their walls, like idle foam,
Whilst from the human spirit's deepest deep,
Strange melody with love and awe struck dumb
Dissonant arms; and Art, which cannot die,
With divine wand traced on our earthly home
Fit imagery to pave heaven's everlasting dome.

X.

Thou huntress swifter than the Moon! thou terror
Of the world's wolves! thou bearer of the quiver,
Whose sunlike shafts pierce tempest-winged Error,
As light may pierce the clouds when they dissever
In the calm regions of the orient day!
Luther caught thy wakening glance:
Like lightning, from his leaden lance
Reflected, it dissolved the visions of the trance
In which, as in a tomb, the nations lay;
And England's prophets hail'd thee as their queen,
In songs whose music cannot pass away,
Though it must flow for ever: not unseen
Before the spirit-sighted countenance
Of Milton didst thou pass, from the sad scene
Beyond whose night he saw, with a dejected mien.

XI.

The eager hours and unreluctant years
As on a dawn-illumined mountain stood,
Trampling to silence their loud hopes and fears,
Darkening each other with their multitude,
And cried aloud, Liberty! Indignation
Answer'd Pity from her cave;
Death grew pale within the grave,
And desolation howl'd to the destroyer, Save!
When like heaven's sun, girt by the exhalation
Of its own glorious light, thou didst arise,
Chasing thy foes from nation unto nation

Like shadows: as if day had cloven the skies
At dreaming midnight o'er the western wave,
Men started, staggering with a glad surprise,
Under the lightnings of thine unfamiliar eyes.

XII.

Thou heaven of earth! what spells could pall thee then,
In ominous eclipse? A thousand years,
Bred from the slime of deep oppression's den,
Dyed all thy liquid light with blood and tears,
Till thy sweet stars could weep the stain away.
How like Bacchanals of blood
Round France, the ghastly vintage, stood
Destruction's sceptred slaves, and folly's mitred brood!
When one, like them, but mightier far than they,
The Anarch of thine own bewilder'd powers
Rose: armies mingled in obscure array,
Like clouds with clouds, darkening the sacred bowers
Of serene heaven. He, by the past pursued,
Rests with those dead, but unforgotten hours,
Whose ghosts scare victor kings in their ancestral towers.

XIII.

England yet sleeps: was she not call'd of old?
Spain calls her now, as with its thrilling thunder
Vesuvius wakens Ætna, and the cold
Snow-crags by its reply are cloven in sunder:
O'er the lit waves every Æolian isle
From Pithecusa to Pelorus
Howls, and leaps, and glares in chorus:
They cry, Be dim, ye lamps of heaven suspended o'er us.
Her chains are threads of gold, she need but smile
And they dissolve; but Spain's were links of steel,
Till bit to dust by virtue's keenest file.
Twins of a single destiny! appeal
To the eternal years enthroned before us,
In the dim West; impress us from a seal,
All ye have thought and done! Time cannot dare conceal.

XIV.

Tomb of Arminius! render up thy dead,
Till, like a standard from a watch-tower's staff,
His soul may stream over the tyrant's head!
Thy victory shall be his epitaph,
Wild Bacchanal of truth's mysterious wine,
King-deluded Germany,
His dead spirit lives in thee.
Why do we fear or hope? thou art already free!
And thou, lost Paradise of this divine
And glorious world! thou flowery wilderness!
Thou island of eternity! thou shrine
Where desolation, clothed with loveliness,
Worships the thing thou wert! O Italy,
Gather thy blood into thy heart; repress
The beasts who make their dens thy sacred palaces.

XV.

O, that the free would stamp the impious name
Of **** into the dust! or write it there,
So that this blot upon the page of fame
Were as a serpent's path, which the light air
Erases, and the flat sands close behind!
Ye the oracle have heard:
Lift the victory-flashing sword,
And cut the snaky knots of this foul gordian word,
Which weak itself as stubble, yet can bind
Into a mass, irrefragably firm,
The axes and the rods which awe mankind;
The sound has poison in it, 't is the sperm
Of what makes life foul, cankerous, and abhorr'd;
Disdain not thou, at thine appointed term,
To set thine armed heel on this reluctant worm.

XVI.

O, that the wise from their bright minds would kindle
Such lamps within the dome of this dim world,
That the pale name of Priest might shrink and dwindle
Into the hell from which it first was hurl'd,
A scoff of impious pride from fiends impure;
Till human thoughts might kneel alone
Each before the judgment-throne
Of its own aweless soul, or of the power unknown!
O, that the words which make the thoughts obscure
From which they spring, as clouds of glimmering dew
From a white lake blot heaven's blue portraiture,
Were stript of their thin masks and various hue,
And frowns and smiles and splendours not their own,
Till in the nakedness of false and true
They stand before their Lord, each to receive its due.

XVII.

He who taught man to vanquish whatsoever
Can be between the cradle and the grave,
Crown'd him the King of Life. O vain endeavour!
If on his own high will a willing slave,
He has enthroned the oppression and the oppressor.
What if earth can clothe and feed
Amplest millions at their need,
And power in thought be as the tree within the seed?
Or what if Art, an ardent intercessor
Diving on fiery wings to Nature's throne,
Checks the great mother stooping to caress her,
And cries: Give me, thy child, dominion
Over all height and depth? if Life can breed
New wants, and wealth from those who toil and groan
Rend of thy gifts and hers a thousandfold for one.

XVIII.

Come Thou, but lead out of the inmost cave
Of man's deep spirit, as the morning-star
Beckons the Sun from the Eoan wave,
Wisdom. I hear the pennons of her car
Self-moving, like cloud charioted by flame;
Comes she not, and come ye not,
Rulers of eternal thought,
To judge with solemn truth, life's ill-apportion'd lot?
Blind Love, and equal Justice, and the Fame
Of what has been, the Hope of what will be!
O, Liberty! if such could be thy name
Wert thou disjoin'd from these, or they from thee:
If thine or theirs were treasures to be bought
By blood or tears, have not the wise and free
Wept tears, and blood like tears? The solemn harmony

XIX.

Paused, and the spirit of that mighty singing
To its abyss was suddenly withdrawn;

Then, as a wild swan, when sublimely winging
Its path athwart the thunder-smoke of dawn,
Sinks headlong through the aerial golden light
On the heavy sounding plain,
When the bolt has pierced its brain;
As summer clouds dissolve, unburthen'd of their rain;
As a far taper fades with fading night,
As a brief insect dies with dying day,
My song, its pinions disarray'd of might,
Droop'd; o'er it closed the echoes far away
Of the great voice which did its flight sustain,
As waves which lately paved his watery way
Hiss round a drowner's head in their tempestuous play.

ODE TO NAPLES.[1]

EPODE I. α.

I stood within the city disinterr'd;[2]
And heard the autumnal leaves like light footfalls
Of spirits passing through the streets; and heard
The Mountain's slumberous voice at intervals
Thrill through those roofless halls;
The oracular thunder penetrating shook
The listening soul in my suspended blood;
I felt that Earth out of her deep heart spoke—
I felt, but heard not:—through white columns glow'd
The isle-sustaining Ocean flood,
A plane of light between two Heavens of azure:
Around me gleam'd many a bright sepulchre
Of whose pure beauty, Time, as if his pleasure
Were to spare Death, had never made erasure;
But every living lineament was clear
As in the sculptor's thought; and there
The wreathes of stony myrtle, ivy and pine,
Like winter leaves o'ergrown by moulded snow,
Seem'd only not to move and grow
Because the crystal silence of the air
Weigh'd on their life; even as the Power divine,
Which then lull'd all things, brooded upon mine.

EPODE II. α.

Then gentle winds arose,
With many a mingled close
Of wild Æolian sound and mountain odour keen;
And where the Baian ocean
Welters with air-like motion,
Within, above, around its bowers of starry green,
Moving the sea-flowers in those purple caves,
Even as the ever stormless atmosphere
Floats o'er the Elysian realm,
It bore me like an Angel, o'er the waves
Of sunlight, whose swift pinnace of dewy air
No storm can overwhelm;
I sail'd, where ever flows
Under the calm Serene
A spirit of deep emotion,
From the unknown graves
Of the dead kings of Melody.[1]
Shadowy Aornos darken'd o'er the helm
The horizontal æther; heaven stript bare
Its depths over Elysium, where the prow
Made the invisible water white as snow;
From that Typhæan mount, Inarime
There stream'd a sunlike vapour, like the standard
Of some ethereal host;
Whilst from all the coast,
Louder and louder, gathering round, there wander'd
Over the oracular woods and divine sea
Prophesyings which grew articulate—
They seize me—I must speak them—be they fate!

STROPHE α. 1.

Naples! thou Heart of men which ever pantest
Naked, beneath the lidless eye of heaven!
Elysian City, which to calm enchantest
The mutinous air and sea! they round thee, even
As sleep round Love, are driven!
Metropolis of a ruin'd Paradise
Long lost, late won, and yet but half regain'd!
Bright Altar of the bloodless sacrifice,
Which armed Victory offers up unstain'd
To Love, the flower-enchain'd!
Thou which wert once, and then didst cease to be,
Now art, and henceforth ever shalt be, free,
If Hope, and Truth, and Justice can avail.
Hail, hail, all hail!

STROPHE β. 2.

Thou youngest giant birth
Which from the groaning earth
Leap'st, clothed in armour of impenetrable scale!
Last, of the Intercessors!
Who 'gainst the Crown'd Transgressors
Pleadest before God's love! Array'd in Wisdom's mail,
Wave thy lightning lance in mirth;
Nor let thy high heart fail,
Though from their hundred gates the leagued Oppressors,
With hurried legions move!
Hail, hail, all hail!

ANTISTROPHE α.

What though Cimmerian Anarchs dare blaspheme
Freedom and thee? thy shield is as a mirror
To make their blind slaves see, and with fierce gleam
To turn his hungry sword upon the wearer,
A new Actæon's error
Shall their's have been—devour'd by their own hounds!
Be thou like the imperial Basilisk,
Killing thy foe with unapparent wounds!
Gaze on oppression, till at that dread risk
Aghast she pass from the Earth's disk:
Fear not, but gaze—for freemen mightier grow,
And slaves more feeble, gazing on their foe.
If Hope and Truth and Justice may avail,
Thou shalt be great.—All hail!

ANTISTROPHE β. 2.

From Freedom's form divine,
From Nature's inmost shrine,

[1] The Author has connected many recollections of his visit to Pompeii and Baiæ with the enthusiasm excited by the intelligence of the proclamation of a Constitutional Government at Naples. This has given a tinge of picturesque and descriptive imagery to the introductory Epodes which depicture these scenes, and some of the majestic feelings permanently connected with the scene of this animating event.—*Author's Note.*

[2] Pompeii.

[1] Homer and Virgil.

Strip every impious gawd, rend Error veil by veil:
O'er Ruin desolate,
O'er Falsehood's fallen state,
Sit thou sublime, unawed; be the Destroyer pale!
And equal laws be thine,
And winged words let sail,
Freighted with truth even from the throne of God:
That wealth, surviving fate,
Be thine.—All hail!

ANTISTROPHE α. γ.

Didst thou not start to hear Spain's thrilling pæan
From land to land re-echoed solemnly,
Till silence became music? From the Æean [1]
To the cold Alps, eternal Italy
Starts to hear thine! The Sea
Which paves the desert streets of Venice laughs
In light and music; widow'd Genoa wan,
By moonlight spells ancestral epitaphs,
Murmuring, where is Doria? fair Milan,
Within whose veins long ran
The viper's [2] palsying venom, lifts her heel
To bruise his head. The signal and the seal
(If Hope and Truth and Justice can avail)
Art Thou of all these hopes.—O hail!

ANTISTROPHE β. γ.

Florence! beneath the sun,
Of cities fairest one,
Blushes within her bower for Freedom's expectation:
From eyes of quenchless hope
Rome tears the priestly cope,
As ruling once by power, so now by admiration,
An athlete stript to run
From a remoter station
For the high prize lost on Philippi's shore:—
As then Hope, Truth, and Justice did avail,
So now may Fraud and Wrong! O hail!

EPODE I. β.

Hear ye the march as of the Earth-born Forms
Array'd against the ever-living Gods?
The crash and darkness of a thousand storms
Bursting their inaccessible abodes
Of crags and thunder-clouds?
See ye the banners blazon'd to the day,
Inwrought with emblems of barbaric pride?
Dissonant threats kill Silence far away,
The serene Heaven which wraps our Eden wide
With iron light is dyed,
The Anarchs of the North lead forth their legions
Like Chaos o'er creation, uncreating;
An hundred tribes nourish'd on strange religions
And lawless slaveries,—down the aerial regions
Of the white Alps, desolating,
Famish'd wolves that bide no waiting,
Blotting the glowing footsteps of old glory,
Trampling our column'd cities into dust,
Their dull and savage lust
On Beauty's corse to sickness satiating—
They come! The fields they tread look black and hoary
With fire—from their red feet the streams run gory!

[1] Æea, the Island of Circe.

[2] The viper was the armorial device of the Visconti, tyrants of Milan.

EPODE II. β.

Great Spirit, deepest Love!
Which rulest and dost move
All things which live and are, within the Italian shore;
Who spreadest heaven around it,
Whose woods, rocks, waves, surround it;
Who sittest in thy star, o'er Ocean's western floor,
Spirit of beauty! at whose soft command
The sunbeams and the showers distil its foison
From the Earth's bosom chill;
O bid those beams be each a blinding brand
Of lightning! bid those showers be dews of poison!
Bid the Earth's plenty kill!
Bid thy bright Heaven above,
Whilst light and darkness bound it,
Be their tomb who plann'd
To make it ours and thine!
Or, with thine harmonizing ardours fill
And raise thy sons, as o'er the prone horizon
Thy lamp feeds every twilight wave with fire—
Be man's high hope and unextinct desire
The instrument to work thy will divine!
Then clouds from sunbeams, antelopes from leopards,
And frowns and fears from Thee,
Would not more swiftly flee
Than Celtic wolves from the Ausonian shepherds.—
Whatever, Spirit, from thy starry shrine
Thou yieldest or withholdest, Oh let be
This city of thy worship ever free!

September, 1820.

THE CLOUD.

I BRING fresh showers for the thirsting flowers,
From the seas and the streams;
I bear light shades for the leaves when laid
In their noon-day dreams.
From my wings are shaken the dews that waken
The sweet buds every one,
When rock'd to rest on their mother's breast,
As she dances about the sun.
I wield the flail of the lashing hail,
And whiten the green plains under,
And then again I dissolve it in rain,
And laugh as I pass in thunder.

I sift the snow on the mountains below,
And their great pines groan aghast;
And all the night 't is my pillow white,
While I sleep in the arms of the blast.
Sublime on the towers of my skiey bowers,
Lightning my pilot sits,
In a cavern under is fetter'd the thunder,
It struggles and howls at fits;
Over earth and ocean, with gentle motion,
This pilot is guiding me,
Lured by the love of the genii that move
In the depths of the purple sea;
Over the rills, and the crags, and the hills,
Over the lakes and the plains,
Wherever he dream, under mountain or stream,
The Spirit he loves remains;
And I all the while bask in heaven's blue smile,
Whilst he is dissolving in rains.

The sanguine sunrise, with his meteor eyes,
And his burning plumes outspread,
Leaps on the back of my sailing rack,
When the morning-star shines dead.
As on the jag of a mountain crag,
Which an earthquake rocks and swings,
An eagle alit one moment may sit
In the light of its golden wings.
And when sunset may breathe, from the lit sea beneath,
Its ardours of rest and of love,
And the crimson pall of eve may fall
From the depth of heaven above,
With wings folded I rest, on mine airy nest,
As still as a brooding dove.

That orbed maiden, with white fire laden,
Whom mortals call the moon,
Glides glimmering o'er my fleece-like floor,
By the midnight breezes strewn;
And wherever the beat of her unseen feet,
Which only the angels hear,
May have broken the woof of my tent's thin roof,
The stars peep behind her and peer;
And I laugh to see them whirl and flee,
Like a swarm of golden bees,
When I widen the rent in my wind-built tent,
Till the calm rivers, lakes, and seas,
Like strips of the sky fallen through me on high,
Are each paved with the moon and these.

I bind the sun's throne with a burning zone,
And the moon's with a girdle of pearl;
The volcanoes are dim, and the stars reel and swim,
When the whirlwinds my banner unfurl.
From cape to cape, with a bridge-like shape,
Over a torrent sea,
Sunbeam-proof, I hang like a roof,
The mountains its columns be.
The triumphal arch through which I march
With hurricane, fire, and snow,
When the powers of the air are chain'd to my chair,
Is the million-colour'd bow;
The sphere-fire above its soft colours wove,
While the moist earth was laughing below.

I am the daughter of earth and water,
And the nursling of the sky;
I pass through the pores of the ocean and shores;
I change, but I cannot die.
For after the rain, when with never a stain,
The pavilion of heaven is bare,
And the winds and sunbeams with their convex gleams,
Build up the blue dome of air,
I silently laugh at my own cenotaph,
And out of the caverns of rain,
Like a child from the womb, like a ghost from the tomb,
I arise and unbuild it again.

TO A SKYLARK.

Hail to thee, blithe spirit!
Bird thou never wert,
That from heaven, or near it,
Pourest thy full heart
In profuse strains of unpremeditated art.

Higher still and higher,
From the earth thou springest
Like a cloud of fire;
The blue deep thou wingest,
And singing still dost soar, and soaring ever singest.

In the golden lightning
Of the sunken sun,
O'er which clouds are brightening,
Thou dost float and run;
Like an unbodied joy whose race is just begun.

The pale purple even
Melts around thy flight;
Like a star of heaven,
In the broad day-light
Thou art unseen, but yet I hear thy shrill delight,

Keen as are the arrows
Of that silver sphere,
Whose intense lamp narrows
In the white dawn clear,
Until we hardly see, we feel that it is there.

All the earth and air
With thy voice is loud,
As, when night is bare,
From one lonely cloud
The moon rains out her beams, and heaven is overflow'd.

What thou art we know not;
What is most like thee?
From rainbow clouds there flow not
Drops so bright to see,
As from thy presence showers a rain of melody.

Like a poet hidden
In the light of thought,
Singing hymns unbidden,
Till the world is wrought
To sympathy with hopes and fears it heeded not:

Like a high-born maiden
In a palace tower,
Soothing her love-laden
Soul in secret hour
With music sweet as love, which overflows her bower:

Like a glow-worm golden
In a dell of dew,
Scattering unbeholden
Its aërial hue
Among the flowers and grass, which screen it from the view:

Like a rose embower'd
In its own green leaves,
By warm winds deflower'd,
Till the scent it gives
Makes faint with too much sweet these heavy-winged thieves.

Sound of vernal showers
On the twinkling grass,
Rain-awaken'd flowers,
All that ever was
Joyous, and clear, and fresh, thy music doth surpass.

Teach us, sprite or bird,
What sweet thoughts are thine:
I have never heard
Praise of love or wine
That panted forth a flood of rapture so divine.

Chorus hymeneal,
Or triumphal chaunt,
Match'd with thine would be all
But an empty vaunt—
A thing wherein we feel there is some hidden want.

What objects are the fountains
Of thy happy strain?
What fields, or waves, or mountains?
What shapes of sky or plain?
What love of thine own kind? what ignorance of pain?

With thy clear keen joyance
Langour cannot be:
Shadow of annoyance
Never came near thee:
Thou lovest; but ne'er knew love's sad satiety.

Waking or asleep,
Thou of death must deem
Things more true and deep
Than we mortals dream,
Or how could thy notes flow in such a crystal stream?

We look before and after,
And pine for what is not:
Our sincerest laughter
With some pain is fraught;
Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought.

Yet if we could scorn
Hate, and pride, and fear;
If we were things born
Not to shed a tear,
I know not how thy joy we ever should come near.

Better than all measures
Of delightful sound,
Better than all treasures
That in books are found,
Thy skill to poet were, thou scorner of the ground!

Teach me half the gladness
That thy brain must know,
Such harmonious madness
From my lips would flow,
The world should listen then, as I am listening now.

AN EXHORTATION.

Cameleons feed on light and air;
Poets' food is love and fame:
If in this wide world of care
Poets could but find the same
With as little toil as they,
Would they ever change their hue
As the light cameleons do,
Suiting it to every ray
Twenty times a-day?

Poets are on this cold earth,
As cameleons might be,
Hidden from their early birth
In a cave beneath the sea.
Where light is, cameleons change;
Where love is not, poets do:
Fame is love disguised—if few
Find either, never think it strange
That poets range.

Yet dare not stain with wealth or power
A poet's free and heavenly mind:
If bright cameleons should devour
Any food but beams and wind,
They would grow as earthly soon
As their brother lizards are.
Children of a sunnier star,
Spirits from beyond the moon,
O, refuse the boon!

HYMN TO INTELLECTUAL BEAUTY.

The awful shadow of some unseen Power
Floats, though unseen, among us; visiting
This various world with as inconstant wing
As summer winds that creep from flower to flower;
Like moonbeams that behind some piny mountain shower,
It visits with inconstant glance
Each human heart and countenance;
Like hues and harmonies of evening,
Like clouds in starlight widely spread,
Like memory of music fled,
Like aught that for its grace may be
Dear, and yet dearer for its mystery.

Spirit of Beauty! that dost consecrate
With thine own hues all thou dost shine upon
Of human thought or form, where art thou gone?
Why dost thou pass away and leave our state,
This dim vast vale of tears, vacant and desolate?
Ask why the sunlight not for ever
Weaves rainbows o'er yon mountain river;
Why aught should fail and fade that once is shown;
Why fear and dream and death and birth
Cast on the daylight of this earth
Such gloom, why man has such a scope
For love and hate, despondency and hope?

No voice from some sublimer world hath ever
To sage or poet these responses given:
Therefore the names of Demon, Ghost, and Heaven,
Remain the records of their vain endeavour:
Frail spells, whose utter'd charm might not avail to sever,
From all we hear and all we see,
Doubt, chance, and mutability.
Thy light alone, like mist o'er mountains driven,
Or music by the night-wind sent
Through strings of some still instrument,
Or moonlight on a midnight stream,
Gives grace and truth to life's unquiet dream.

Love, Hope, and Self-esteem, like clouds, depart
And come, for some uncertain moments lent.
Man were immortal, and omnipotent,
Didst thou, unknown and awful as thou art,

Keep with thy glorious train firm state within his heart.
Thou messenger of sympathies
That wax and wane in lovers' eyes;
Thou, that to human thought art nourishment,
Like darkness to a dying flame!
Depart not as thy shadow came;
Depart not, lest the grave should be,
Like life and fear, a dark reality.

While yet a boy I sought for ghosts, and sped
Through many a listening chamber, cave and ruin,
And starlight wood, with fearful steps pursuing
Hopes of high talk with the departed dead:
I call'd on poisonous names with which our youth is fed:
I was not heard: I saw them not.
When musing deeply on the lot
Of life, at that sweet time when winds are wooing
All vital things that wake to bring
News of birds and blossoming,
Sudden, thy shadow fell on me:
I shriek'd, and clasp'd my hands in ecstacy!

I vow'd that I would dedicate my powers
To thee and thine: have I not kept the vow?
With beating heart and streaming eyes, even now
I call the phantoms of a thousand hours
Each from his voiceless grave: they have in vision'd bowers
Of studious zeal or love's delight
Outwatch'd with me the envious night:
They know that never joy illumed my brow,
Unlink'd with hope that thou wouldst free
This world from its dark slavery,
That thou, O awful LOVELINESS,
Wouldst give whate'er these words cannot express.

The day becomes more solemn and serene
When noon is past: there is a harmony
In autumn, and a lustre in its sky,
Which through the summer is not heard or seen,
As if it could not be, as if it had not been!
Thus let thy power, which like the truth
Of nature on my passive youth
Descended, to my onward life supply
Its calm, to one who worships thee,
And every form containing thee,
Whom, SPIRIT fair, thy spells did bind
To fear himself, and love all human kind.

MARIANNE'S DREAM.

A PALE dream came to a Lady fair,
And said, a boon, a boon, I pray!
I know the secrets of the air,
And things are lost in the glare of day,
Which I can make the sleeping see,
If they will put their trust in me.

And thou shalt know of things unknown,
If thou wilt let me rest between
The veiny lids, whose fringe is thrown
Over thine eyes so dark and sheen:
And half in hope, and half in fright,
The Lady closed her eyes so bright.

At first all deadly shapes were driven
Tumultuously across her sleep,
And o'er the vast cope of bending heaven
All ghastly visaged clouds did sweep;
And the Lady ever look'd to spy
If the gold sun shone forth on high.

And as towards the east she turn'd,
She saw aloft in the morning air,
Which now with hues of sunrise burn'd,
A great black Anchor rising there;
And wherever the Lady turn'd her eyes,
It hung before her in the skies.

The sky was blue as the summer sea,
The depths were cloudless over-head,
The air was calm as it could be,
There was no sight or sound of dread,
But that black Anchor floating still
Over the piny eastern hill.

The Lady grew sick with a weight of fear,
To see that Anchor ever hanging,
And veil'd her eyes; she then did hear
The sound as of a dim low clanging,
And look'd abroad if she might know
Was it aught else, or but the flow
Of the blood in her own veins, to and fro.

There was a mist in the sunless air,
Which shook as it were with an earthquake's shock,
But the very weeds that blossom'd there
Were moveless, and each mighty rock
Stood on its basis stedfastly;
The Anchor was seen no more on high.

But piled around, with summits hid
In lines of cloud at intervals,
Stood many a mountain pyramid,
Among whose everlasting walls
Two mighty cities shone, and ever
Through the red mist their domes did quiver.

On two dread mountains, from whose crest,
Might seem, the eagle, for her brood,
Would ne'er have hung her dizzy nest,
Those tower-encircled cities stood.
A vision strange such towers to see,
Sculptured and wrought so gorgeously,
Where human art could never be.

And columns framed of marble white,
And giant fanes, dome over dome
Piled, and triumphant gates, all bright
With workmanship, which could not come
From touch of mortal instrument,
Shot o'er the vales, or lustre lent
From its own shapes magnificent.

But still the Lady heard that clang
Filling the wide air far away;
And still the mist whose light did hang
Among the mountains shook alway,

So that the Lady's heart beat fast,
As, half in joy and half aghast,
On those high domes her look she cast.

Sudden, from out that city sprung
A light that made the earth grow red;
Two flames that each with quivering tongue
Lick'd its high domes, and over head
Among those mighty towers and fanes
Dropp'd fire, as a volcano rains
Its sulphurous ruin on the plains.

And hark! a rush as if the deep
Had burst its bonds; she look'd behind,
And saw over the western steep
A raging flood descend, and wind
Through that wide vale; she felt no fear,
But said within herself, 't is clear
These towers are Nature's own, and she
To save them has sent forth the sea.

And now those raging billows came
Where that fair Lady sate, and she
Was borne towards the showering flame
By the wild waves heap'd tumultuously,
And on a little plank, the flow
Of the whirlpool bore her to and fro.

The waves were fiercely vomited
From every tower and every dome,
And dreary light did widely shed
O'er that vast flood's suspended foam,
Beneath the smoke which hung its night
On the stain'd cope of heaven's light.

The plank whereon that Lady sate
Was driven through the chasms, about and about,
Between the peaks so desolate
Of the drowning mountain, in and out,
As the thistle-beard on a whirlwind sails—
While the flood was filling those hollow vales.

At last her plank an eddy crost,
And bore her to the city's wall,
Which now the flood had reach'd almost:
It might the stoutest heart appal
To hear the fire roar and hiss
Through the domes of those mighty palaces.

The eddy whirl'd her round and round
Before a gorgeous gate, which stood
Piercing the clouds of smoke which bound
Its aery arch with light like blood;
She look'd on that gate of marble clear,
With wonder that extinguish'd fear.

For it was fill'd with sculptures rarest,
Or forms most beautiful and strange,
Like nothing human, but the fairest
Of winged shapes, whose legions range
Throughout the sleep of those that are,
Like this same Lady, good and fair.

And as she look'd, still lovelier grew
Those marble forms;—the sculptor sure
Was a strong spirit, and the hue
Of his own mind did there endure
After the touch, whose power had braided
Such grace, was in some sad change faded.

She look'd, the flames were dim, the flood
Grew tranquil as a woodland river
Winding through hills in solitude;
Those marble shapes then seem'd to quiver,
And their fair limbs to float in motion,
Like weeds unfolding in the ocean.

And their lips moved; one seem'd to speak,
When suddenly the mountain crackt,
And through the chasm the flood did break
With an earth-uplifting cataract:
The statues gave a joyous scream,
And on its wings the pale thin dream
Lifted the Lady from the stream.

The dizzy flight of that phantom pale
Waked the fair Lady from her sleep,
And she arose, while from the veil
Of her dark eyes the dream did creep,
And she walk'd about as one who knew
That sleep has sights as clear and true
As any waking eyes can view.

Marlow, 1817.

MONT BLANC.

LINES WRITTEN IN THE VALE OF CHAMOUNI.

I.

The everlasting universe of things
Flows through the mind, and rolls its rapid waves,
Now dark—now glittering—now reflecting gloom—
Now lending splendour, where from secret springs
The source of human thought its tribute brings
Of waters,—with a sound but half its own,
Such as a feeble brook will oft assume
In the wild woods, among the mountains lone,
Where waterfalls around it leap for ever,
Where woods and winds contend, and a vast river
Over its rocks ceaselessly bursts and raves.

II.

Thus thou, Ravine of Arve—dark, deep Ravine—
Thou many-colour'd, many-voiced vale,
Over whose pines and crags and caverns sail
Fast clouds, shadows, and sunbeams: awful scene,
Where Power in likeness of the Arve comes down
From the ice gulfs that gird his secret throne,
Bursting through these dark mountains, like the flame
Of lightning through the tempest; thou dost lie,
Thy giant brood of pines around thee clinging,
Children of elder time, in whose devotion
The chainless winds still come and ever came
To drink their odours, and their mighty swinging
To hear—an old and solemn harmony:
Thine earthly rainbows stretch'd across the sweep
Of the ethereal waterfall, whose veil
Robes some unsculptured image; the strange sleep
Which, when the voices of the desert fail,
Wraps all in its own deep eternity;—
Thy caverns, echoing to the Arve's commotion
A loud lone sound, no other sound can tame:

Thou art pervaded with that ceaseless motion,
Thou art the path of that unresting sound—
Dizzy Ravine! and when I gaze on thee
I seem as in a trance sublime and strange
To muse on my own separate phantasy,
My own, my human mind, which passively
Now renders and receives fast influencings,
Holding an unremitting interchange
With the clear universe of things around;
One legion of wild thoughts, whose wandering wings
Now float above thy darkness, and now rest
Where that or thou art no unbidden guest,
In the still cave of the witch Poesy,
Seeking among the shadows that pass by,
Ghosts of all things that are, some shade of thee,
Some phantom, some faint image; till the breast
From which they fled recals them, thou art there!

III.

Some say that gleams of a remoter world
Visit the soul in sleep,—that death is slumber,
And that its shapes the busy thoughts outnumber
Of those who wake and live.—I look on high;
Has some unknown omnipotence unfurl'd
The veil of life and death? or do I lie
In dream, and does the mightier world of sleep
Spread far around and inaccessibly
Its circles? For the very spirit fails,
Driven like a homeless cloud from steep to steep
That vanishes among the viewless gales!
Far, far above, piercing the infinite sky,
Mont Blanc appears,—still, snowy, and serene—
Its subject mountains their unearthly forms
Pile around it, ice and rock; broad vales between
Of frozen floods, unfathomable deeps,
Blue as the overhanging heaven, that spread
And wind among the accumulated steeps;
A desert peopled by the storms alone,
Save when the eagle brings some hunter's bone,
And the wolf tracks her there—how hideously
Its shapes are heap'd around! rude, bare, and high,
Ghastly, and scarr'd, and riven.—Is this the scene
Where the old Earthquake-dæmon taught her young
Ruin? Were these their toys? or did a sea
Of fire envelop once this silent snow?
None can reply—all seems eternal now.
The wilderness has a mysterious tongue
Which teaches awful doubt, or faith so mild,
So solemn, so serene, that man may be
But for such faith with nature reconciled:
Thou hast a voice, great Mountain, to repeal
Large codes of fraud and woe; not understood
By all, but which the wise, and great, and good
Interpret, or make felt, or deeply feel.

IV.

The fields, the lakes, the forests, and the streams,
Ocean, and all the living things that dwell
Within the dædal earth; lightning, and rain,
Earthquake, and fiery flood, and hurricane,
The torpor of the year when feeble dreams
Visit the hidden buds, or dreamless sleep
Holds every future leaf and flower;—the bound
With which from that detested trance they leap;
The works and ways of man, their death and birth,
And that of him and all that his may be;
All things that move and breathe with toil and sound
Are born and die, revolve, subside and swell.
Power dwells apart in its tranquillity
Remote, serene, and inaccessible:
And *this*, the naked countenance of earth,
On which I gaze, even these primæval mountains,
Teach the adverting mind. The glaciers creep,
Like snakes that watch their prey, from their far fountains,
Slow rolling on; there, many a precipice
Frost and the Sun in scorn of mortal power
Have piled—dome, pyramid, and pinnacle,
A city of death, distinct with many a tower
And wall impregnable of beaming ice.
Yet not a city, but a flood of ruin
Is there, that from the boundaries of the sky
Rolls its perpetual stream; vast pines are strewing
Its destined path, or in the mangled soil
Branchless and shatter'd stand; the rocks, drawn down
From yon remotest waste, have overthrown
The limits of the dead and living world,
Never to be reclaim'd. The dwelling-place
Of insects, beasts, and birds becomes its spoil;
Their food and their retreat for ever gone,
So much of life and joy is lost. The race
Of man flies far in dread; his work and dwelling
Vanish, like smoke before the tempest's stream,
And their place is not known. Below, vast caves
Shine in the rushing torrents' restless gleam,
Which, from those secret chasms in tumult welling,
Meet in the vale, and one majestic River,
The breath and blood of distant lands, for ever
Rolls its loud waters to the ocean waves,
Breathes its swift vapours to the circling air.

V.

Mont Blanc yet gleams on high:—the power is there,
The still and solemn power of many sights
And many sounds, and much of life and death.
In the calm darkness of the moonless nights,
In the lone glare of day, the snows descend
Upon that Mountain; none beholds them there,
Nor when the flakes burn in the sinking sun,
Or the star-beams dart through them:—Winds contend
Silently there, and heap the snow with breath
Rapid and strong, but silently! Its home
The voiceless lightning in these solitudes
Keeps innocently, and like vapour broods
Over the snow. The secret strength of things
Which governs thought, and to the infinite dome
Of heaven is as a law, inhabits thee!
And what were thou, and earth, and stars, and sea,
If to the human mind's imaginings
Silence and solitude were vacancy?

SWITZERLAND, *June* 23, 1816.

ON THE MEDUSA OF LEONARDO DA VINCI,

IN THE FLORENTINE GALLERY.

It lieth, gazing on the midnight sky,
Upon the cloudy mountain peak supine;
Below, far lands are seen tremblingly;
Its horror and its beauty are divine.
Upon its lips and eyelids seems to lie
Loveliness like a shadow, from which shrine,

Fiery and lurid, struggling underneath,
The agonies of anguish and of death.

Yet it is less the horror than the grace
Which turns the gazer's spirit into stone;
Whereon the lineaments of that dead face
Are graven, till the characters be grown
Into itself, and thought no more can trace;
'T is the melodious hue of beauty thrown
Athwart the darkness and the glare of pain,
Which humanize and harmonize the strain.

And from its head as from one body grow,
As [ ] grass out of a watery rock,
Hairs which are vipers, and they curl and flow,
And their long tangles in each other lock,
And with unending involutions show
Their mailed radiance, as it were to mock
The torture and the death within, and saw
The solid air with many a ragged jaw.

And from a stone beside, a poisonous eft
Peeps idly into these Gorgonian eyes;
Whilst in the air a ghastly bat, bereft
Of sense, has flitted with a mad surprise
Out of the cave this hideous light had cleft,
And he comes hastening like a moth that hies
After a taper; and the midnight sky
Flares, a light more dread than obscurity.

'T is the tempestuous loveliness of terror;
For from the serpents gleams a brazen glare
Kindled by that inextricable error,
Which makes a thrilling vapour of the air
Become a [ ] and ever-shifting mirror
Of all the beauty and the terror there—
A woman's countenance, with serpent locks,
Gazing in death on heaven from those wet rocks.
Florence, 1819.

SONG.

Rarely, rarely, comest thou,
Spirit of Delight!
Wherefore hast thou left me now
Many a day and night?
Many a weary night and day
'T is since thou art fled away.

How shall ever one like me
Win thee back again?
With the joyous and the free
Thou wilt scoff at pain.
Spirit false! thou hast forgot
All but those who need thee not.

As a lizard with the shade
Of a trembling leaf,
Thou with sorrow art dismay'd;
Even the sighs of grief
Reproach thee, that thou art not near,
And reproach thou wilt not hear.

Let me set my mournful ditty
To a merry measure,
Thou wilt never come for pity,
Thou wilt come for pleasure:
Pity then will cut away
Those cruel wings, and thou wilt stay.

I love all that thou lovest,
Spirit of Delight!
The fresh Earth in new leaves drest,
And the starry night,
Autumn evening, and the morn
When the golden mists are born.

I love snow, and all the forms
Of the radiant frost;
I love waves, and winds, and storms,
Every thing almost
Which is Nature's, and may be
Untainted by man's misery.

I love tranquil solitude,
And such society
As is quiet, wise and good.
Between thee and me
What difference? but thou dost possess
The things I seek, not love them less.

I love Love—though he has wings,
And like light can flee,
But above all other things,
Spirit, I love thee—
Thou art love and life! O come,
Make once more my heart thy home.

TO CONSTANTIA,

SINGING.

Thus to be lost, and thus to sink and die,
Perchance were death indeed!—Constantia, turn!
In thy dark eyes a power like light doth lie,
Even though the sounds which were thy voice, which burn
Between thy lips, are laid to sleep;
Within thy breath, and on thy hair, like odour it is yet,
And from thy touch like fire doth leap.
Even while I write, my burning cheeks are wet—
Alas, that the torn heart can bleed, but not forget!

A breathless awe, like the swift change
Unseen, but felt in youthful slumbers,
Wild, sweet, but uncommunicably strange,
Thou breathest now in fast ascending numbers.
The cope of heaven seems rent and cloven
By the enchantment of thy strain,
And on my shoulders wings are woven,
To follow its sublime career,
Beyond the mighty moons that wane
Upon the verge of nature's utmost sphere,
'T ill the world's shadowy walls are past and disappear.

Her voice is hovering o'er my soul—it lingers,
O'ershadowing it with soft and lulling wings;
The blood and life within those snowy fingers
Teach witchcraft to the instrumental strings.
My brain is wild, my breath comes quick—
The blood is listening in my frame,
And thronging shadows, fast and thick,
Fall on my overflowing eyes;
My heart is quivering like a flame;

As morning dew, that in the sunbeam dies,
I am dissolved in these consuming ecstacies.

I have no life, Constantia, now, but thee,
Whilst, like the world-surrounding air, thy song
Flows on, and fills all things with melody.—
Now is thy voice a tempest swift and strong,
On which, like one in trance upborne,
Secure o'er rocks and waves I sweep,
Rejoicing like a cloud of morn.
Now 't is the breath of summer night,
Which, when the starry waters sleep,
Round western isles, with incense-blossoms bright,
Lingering, suspends my soul in its voluptuous flight.

THE FUGITIVES.

I.

The waters are flashing,
The white hail is dashing,
The lightnings are glancing,
The hoar-spray is dancing—
Away!

The whirlwind is rolling,
The thunder is tolling,
The forest is swinging,
The minster bells ringing—
Come away!

The Earth is like Ocean,
Wreck-strewn and in motion:
Bird, beast, man and worm
Have crept out of the storm—
Come away!

II.

«Our boat has one sail,
And the helmsman is pale;—
A bold pilot I trow,
Who should follow us now,»—
Shouted He—

And she cried: «Ply the oar!
Put off gaily from shore!—
As she spoke, bolts of death
Mix'd with hail speck'd their path
O'er the sea.

And from isle, tower and rock,
The blue beacon cloud broke,
And though dumb in the blast,
The red cannon flash'd fast
From the lee.

III.

«And fear'st thou, and fear'st thou?
And see'st thou, and hear'st thou?
And drive we not free
O'er the terrible sea,
I and thou?»

One boat-cloak did cover
The loved and the lover—
Their blood beats one measure,
They murmur proud pleasure
Soft and low;—

While around the lash'd Ocean,
Like mountains in motion,
Is withdrawn and uplifted,
Sunk, shatter'd and shifted,
To and fro.

IV.

In the court of the fortress,
Beside the pale portress,
Like a blood-hound well beaten,
The bridegroom stands, eaten
By shame;

On the topmost watch-turret,
As a death-boding spirit,
Stands the grey tyrant father,
To his voice the mad weather
Seems tame;

And with curses as wild
As ere clung to child,
He devotes to the blast
The best, loveliest, and last
Of his name!

A LAMENT.

Swifter far than summer's flight,
Swifter far than youth's delight,
Swifter far than happy night,
Art thou come and gone:
As the earth when leaves are dead,
As the night when sleep is sped,
As the heart when joy is fled,
I am left lone, alone.

The swallow Summer comes again,
The owlet Night resumes her reign,
But the wild swan Youth is fain
To fly with thee, false as thou.
My heart each day desires the morrow,
Sleep itself is turn'd to sorrow,
Vainly would my winter borrow
Sunny leaves from any bough.

Lilies for a bridal bed,
Roses for a matron's head,
Violets for a maiden dead,
Pansies let my flowers be:
On the living grave I bear,
Scatter them without a tear,
Let no friend, however dear,
Waste one hope, one fear for me.

THE PINE FOREST

OF THE CASCINE, NEAR PISA.

Dearest, best and brightest,
Come away,
To the woods and to the fields!
Dearer than this fairest day,
Which like thee to those in sorrow,
Comes to bid a sweet good-morrow
To the rough year just awake
In its cradle in the brake.

The eldest of the hours of spring,
Into the winter wandering,
Looks upon the leafless wood;
And the banks all bare and rude
Found it seems this halcyon morn,
In February's bosom born,
Bending from heaven, in azure mirth,
Kiss'd the cold forehead of the earth,
And smiled upon the silent sea,
And bade the frozen streams be free;
And waked to music all the fountains,
And breathed upon the rigid mountains,
And made the wintry world appear
Like one on whom thou smilest, dear.

Radiant Sister of the Day,
Awake! arise! and come away!
To the wild woods and the plains,
To the pools where winter rains
Image all the roof of leaves;
Where the Pine its garland weaves,
Sapless, grey, and ivy dun,
Round stones that never kiss the sun;
To the sandhills of the sea,
Where the earliest violets be.

Now the last day of many days,
All beautiful and bright as thou,
The loveliest and the last, is dead,
Rise Memory, and write its praise,
And do thy wonted work, and trace
The epitaph of glory fled:
For the Earth hath changed its face,
A frown is on the Heaven's brow.

We wander'd to the Pine Forest
That skirts the Ocean's foam,
The lightest wind was in its nest,
The tempest in its home.

The whispering waves were half asleep,
The clouds were gone to play,
And on the woods, and on the deep,
The smile of Heaven lay.

It seem'd as if the day were one
Sent from beyond the skies,
Which shed to earth above the sun
A light of Paradise.

We paused amid the Pines that stood
The giants of the waste,
Tortured by storms to shapes as rude,
With stems like serpents interlaced.

How calm it was!—the silence there
By such a chain was bound,
That even the busy woodpecker
Made stiller by her sound

The inviolable quietness;
The breath of peace we drew,
With its soft motion made not less
The calm that round us grew.

It seem'd that from the remotest seat
Of the white mountain's waste,
To the bright flower beneath our feet,
A magic circle traced;—

A spirit interfused around,
A thinking silent life,
To momentary peace it bound
Our mortal Nature's strife.—

For still it seem'd the centre of
The magic circle there,
Was one whose being fill'd with love
The breathless atmosphere.

Were not the crocusses that grew
Under that ilex tree,
As beautiful in scent and hue
As ever fed the bee?

We stood beside the pools that lie
Under the forest bough,
And each seemed like a sky
Gulf'd in a world below;—

A purple firmament of light,
Which in the dark earth lay,
More boundless than the depth of night,
And clearer than the day—

In which the massy forests grew,
As in the upper air,
More perfect both in shape and hue
Than any waving there.

Like one beloved, the scene had lent
To the dark water's breast
Its every leaf and lineament,
With that clear truth express'd.

There lay far glades and neighbouring lawn,
And, through the dark green crowd,
The white sun twinkling like the dawn
Under a speckled cloud.

Sweet views, which in our world above
Can never well be seen,
Were imaged by the water's love
Of that fair forest green.

And all was interfused beneath
Within an Elysium air,
An atmosphere without a breath,
A silence sleeping there.

Until a wandering wind crept by,
Like an unwelcome thought,
Which from my mind's too faithful eye
Blots thy bright image out.

For thou art good and dear and kind,
The forest ever green,
But less of peace in S——'s mind,
Than calm in waters seen.

February 2, 1822.

TO NIGHT.

Swiftly walk over the western wave,
Spirit of Night!
Out of the misty eastern cave,
Where, all the long and lone daylight,
Thou wovest dreams of joy and fear,
Which make thee terrible and dear,—
Swift be thy flight!

Wrap thy form in a mantle grey,
Star-inwrought!
Blind with thine hair the eyes of day,
Kiss her until she be wearied out,
Then wander o'er city, and sea, and land,
Touching all with thine opiate wand—
Come, long sought!

When I arose and saw the dawn,
I sigh'd for thee;
When light rode high, and the dew was gone,
And noon lay heavy on flower and tree,
And the weary Day turn'd to his rest,
Lingering like an unloved guest,
I sigh'd for thee.

Thy brother Death came, and cried,
Wouldst thou me?
Thy sweet child Sleep, the filmy-eyed,
Murmur'd like a noon-tide bee,
Shall I nestle near thy side?
Wouldst thou me?—And I replied,
No, not thee!

Death will come when thou art dead,
Soon, too soon—
Sleep will come when thou art fled;
Of neither would I ask the boon
I ask of thee, beloved Night—
Swift be thine approaching flight,
Come soon, soon!

EVENING.

PONTE A MARE, PISA.

The sun is set; the swallows are asleep;
The bats are flitting fast in the grey air;
The slow soft toads out of damp corners creep,
And evening's breath, wandering here and there
Over the quivering surface of the stream,
Wakes not one ripple from its silent dream.

There is no dew on the dry grass to-night,
Nor damp within the shadow of the trees;
The wind is intermitting, dry, and light;
And in the inconstant motion of the breeze
The dust and straws are driven up and down,
And whirl'd about the pavement of the town.

Within the surface of the fleeting river
The wrinkled image of the city lay,
Immoveably unquiet, and for ever
It trembles, but it never fades away;
Go to the [ ]
You, being changed, will find it then as now.

The chasm in which the sun has sunk is shut
By darkest barriers of enormous cloud,
Like mountain over mountain huddled—but
Growing and moving upwards in a crowd,
And over it a space of watery blue,
Which the keen evening star is shining through.

ARETHUSA.

Arethusa arose
From her couch of snows
In the Acroceraunian mountains,—
From cloud and from crag,
With many a jag,
Shepherding her bright fountains.
She leapt down the rocks,
With her rainbow locks
Streaming among the streams;—
Her steps paved with green
The downward ravine
Which slopes to the western gleams:
And gliding and springing,
She went, ever singing,
In murmurs as soft as sleep;
The Earth seem'd to love her,
And Heaven smiled above her,
As she linger'd towards the deep.

Then Alpheus bold,
On his glacier cold,
With his trident the mountains strook;
And open'd a chasm
In the rocks;—with the spasm
All Erymanthus shook.
And the black south wind
It conceal'd behind
The urns of the silent snow,
And earthquake and thunder
Did rend in sunder
The bars of the springs below:
The beard and the hair
Of the river God were
Seen through the torrent's sweep,
As he follow'd the light
Of the fleet nymph's flight
To the brink of the Dorian deep.

"Oh, save me! Oh, guide me!
And bid the deep hide me,
For he grasps me now by the hair!"
The loud Ocean heard,
To its blue depth stirr'd,
And divided at her prayer;
And under the water
The Earth's white daughter
Fled like a sunny beam;
Behind her descended,
Her billows unblended
With the brackish Dorian stream:—
Like a gloomy stain
On the emerald main
Alpheus rush'd behind,—
As an eagle pursuing
A dove to its ruin,
Down the streams of the cloudy wind.

Under the bowers
Where the Ocean Powers
Sit on their pearled thrones,
Through the coral woods
Of the weltering floods,
Over heaps of unvalued stones:
Through the dim beams
Which amid the streams
Weave a net-work of colour'd light;
And under the caves,
Where the shadowy waves
Are as green as the forest's night:—
Outspeeding the shark,
And the sword-fish dark,
Under the ocean foam,
And up through the rifts
Of the mountain clifts,
They pass'd to their Dorian home.

And now from their fountains
In Enna's mountains,
Down one vale where the morning basks,
Like friends once parted
Grown single-hearted,
They ply their watery tasks.
At sun-rise they leap
From their cradles steep
In the cave of the shelving hill;
At noontide they flow
Through the woods below,
And the meadows of Asphodel;
And at night they sleep
In the rocking deep
Beneath the Ortygian shore;—
Like spirits that lie
In the azure sky
When they love but live no more.

Pisa, 1820.

THE QUESTION.

I DREAM'D that, as I wander'd by the way,
Bare winter suddenly was changed to spring,
And gentle odours led my steps astray,
Mix'd with a sound of waters murmuring
Along a shelving bank of turf, which lay
Under a copse, and hardly dared to fling
Its green arms round the bosom of the stream,
But kiss'd it and then fled, as thou mightest in dream.

There grew pied wind-flowers and violets,
Daisies, those pearl'd Arcturi of the earth,
The constellated flower that never sets;
Faint oxlips; tender bluebells, at whose birth
The sod scarce heaved; and that tall flower that wets
Its mother's face with heaven-collected tears,
When the low wind, its playmate's voice, it hears.

And in the warm hedge grew lush eglantine,
Green cow-bind and the moonlight-colour'd May,
And cherry blossoms, and white cups, whose wine
Was the bright dew yet drain'd not by the day;
And wild roses, and ivy serpentine,
With its dark buds and leaves, wandering astray;
And flowers azure, black and streak'd with gold,
Fairer than any waken'd eyes behold.

And nearer to the river's trembling edge
There grew broad flag flowers, purple prankt with white,
And starry river buds among the sedge,
And floating water-lilies, broad and bright,
Which lit the oak that overhung the hedge
With moonlight beams of their own watery light;
And bulrushes, and reeds of such deep green
As soothed the dazzled eye with sober sheen.

Methought that of these visionary flowers
I made a nosegay, bound in such a way
That the same hues, which in their natural bowers
Were mingled or opposed, the like array
Kept these imprison'd children of the Hours
Within my hand,—and then, elate and gay,
I hasten'd to the spot whence I had come,
That I might there present it!—Oh! to whom?

LINES TO AN INDIAN AIR.

I ARISE from dreams of thee
In the first sweet sleep of night,
When the winds are breathing low,
And the stars are shining bright:
I arise from dreams of thee,
And a spirit in my feet
Has led me—who knows how?
To thy chamber window, sweet!

The wandering airs they faint
On the dark, the silent stream—
The champak odours fail
Like sweet thoughts in a dream;
The nightingale's complaint,
It dies upon her heart,
As I must on thine,
Beloved as thou art!

O lift me from the grass!
I die, I faint, I fail!
Let thy love in kisses rain
On my lips and eyelids pale.
My cheek is cold and white, alas!
My heart beats loud and fast,
Oh! press it close to thine again,
Where it will break at last.

STANZAS

WRITTEN IN DEJECTION, NEAR NAPLES.

THE sun is warm, the sky is clear,
The waves are dancing fast and bright,
Blue isles and snowy mountains wear
The purple noon's transparent light
Around its unexpanded buds;
Like many a voice of one delight,
The winds, the birds, the ocean floods,
The City's voice itself is soft, like Solitude's.

I see the deep's untrampled floor
With green and purple sea-weeds strown;
I see the waves upon the shore,
Like light dissolved in star-showers, thrown:

I sit upon the sands alone,
The lightning of the noon-tide ocean
Is flashing round me, and a tone,
Arises from its measured motion,
How sweet! did any heart now share in my emotion.

Alas! I have nor hope nor health,
Nor peace within nor calm around,
Nor that content surpassing wealth
The sage in meditation found,
And walk'd with inward glory crown'd—
Nor fame, nor power, nor love, nor leisure.
Others I see whom these surround—
Smiling they live, and call life pleasure;
To me that cup has been dealt in another measure.

Yet now despair itself is mild,
Even as the winds and waters are;
I could lie down like a tired child,
And weep away the life of care
Which I have borne and yet must bear,
Till death like sleep might steal on me,
And I might feel in the warm air
My cheek grow cold, and hear the sea
Breathe o'er my dying brain its last monotony.

Some might lament that I were cold,
As I, when this sweet day is gone,
Which my lost heart, too soon grown old,
Insults with this untimely moan;
They might lament—for I am one
Whom men love not,—and yet regret,
Unlike this day, which, when the sun
Shall on its stainless glory set,
Will linger, though enjoy'd, like joy in memory yet.

December, 1818.

AUTUMN:

A DIRGE.

The warm sun is failing, the bleak wind is wailing,
The bare boughs are sighing, the pale flowers are dying,
And the year
On the earth her death-bed, in a shroud of leaves dead,
Is lying.
Come, months, come away,
From November to May,
In your saddest array;
Follow the bier
Of the dead cold year,
And like dim shadows watch by her sepulchre.

The chill rain is falling, the nipt worm is crawling,
The rivers are swelling, the thunder is knelling
For the year;
The blithe swallows are flown, and the lizards each gone
To his dwelling;
Come, months, come away;
Put on white, black, and grey,
Let your light sisters play—
Ye, follow the bier
Of the dead cold year,
And make her grave green with tear on tear.

HYMN OF APOLLO.

The sleepless Hours who watch me as I lie,
Curtain'd with star-enwoven tapestries,
From the broad moonlight of the sky,
Fanning the busy dreams from my dim eyes,—
Waken me when their Mother, the grey Dawn,
Tells them that dreams and that the moon is gone.

Then I arise, and climbing Heaven's blue dome,
I walk over the mountains and the waves,
Leaving my robe upon the ocean foam;
My footsteps pave the clouds with fire; the caves
Are fill'd with my bright presence, and the air
Leaves the green earth to my embraces bare.

The sunbeams are my shafts, with which I kill
Deceit, that loves the night and fears the day;
All men who do or even imagine ill
Fly me, and from the glory of my ray
Good minds and open actions take new might,
Until diminish'd by the reign of night.

I feed the clouds, the rainbows and the flowers,
With their ethereal colours; the Moon's globe
And the pure stars in their eternal bowers
Are cinctured with my power as with a robe;
Whatever lamps on Earth or Heaven may shine
Are portions of one power, which is mine.

I stand at noon upon the peak of Heaven,
Then with unwilling steps I wander down
Into the clouds of the Atlantic even;
For grief that I depart they weep and frown:
What look is more delightful than the smile
With which I soothe them from the western isle?

I am the eye with which the Universe
Beholds itself and knows itself divine;
All harmony of instrument or verse,
All prophecy, all medicine are mine,
All light of art or nature;—to my song
Victory and praise in their own right belong.

HYMN OF PAN.

From the forests and highlands
We come, we come;
From the river-girt islands,
Where loud waves are dumb
Listening to my sweet pipings.
The wind in the reeds and the rushes,
The bees on the bells of thyme,
The birds on the myrtle bushes,
The cicale above in the lime,
And the lizards below in the grass,
Were as silent as ever old Tmolus [1] was,
Listening to my sweet pipings.

Liquid Peneus was flowing,
And all dark Tempe lay
In Pelion's shadow, outgrowing
The light of the dying day,

[1] This and the former poem were written at the request of a friend, to be inserted in a drama on the subject of Midas. Apollo and Pan contended before Tmolus for the prize in music.

Speeded by my sweet pipings.
The Sileni, and Sylvans, and Fauns,
And the Nymphs of the woods and waves,
To the edge of the moist river-lawns,
And the brink of the dewy caves,
And all that did then attend and follow,
Were silent with love, as you now, Apollo,
With envy of my sweet pipings.

I sang of the dancing stars,
I sang of the dædal Earth,
And of Heaven—and the giant wars,
And Love, and Death, and Birth,—
And then I changed my pipings,—
Singing how down the vale of Menalus
I pursued a maiden and clasp'd a reed:
Gods and men, we are all deluded thus!
It breaks in our bosom and then we bleed:
All wept, as I think both ye now would,
If envy or age had not frozen your blood,
At the sorrow of my sweet pipings.

THE BOAT

ON THE SERCHIO.

Our boat is asleep in Serchio's stream,
Its sails are folded like thoughts in a dream,
The helm sways idly, hither and thither;
Dominic, the boat-man, has brought the mast,
And the oars and the sails; but 't is sleeping fast,
Like a beast, unconscious of its tether.

The stars burnt out in the pale blue air,
And the thin white moon lay withering there;
To tower, and cavern, and rift and tree,
The owl and the bat fled drowsily.
Day had kindled the dewy woods,
And the rocks above and the stream below,
And the vapours in their multitudes,
And the Apennine's shroud of summer snow,
And clothed with light of aery gold
The mists in their eastern caves uproll'd.

Day had awaken'd all things that be,
The lark and the thrush and the swallow free,
And the milkmaid's song and the mower's scythe,
And the matin-bell and the mountain bee:
Fire-flies were quench'd on the dewy corn,
Glow-worms went out on the river's brim,
Like lamps which a student forgets to trim:
The beetle forgot to wind his horn,
The crickets were still in the meadow and hill:
Like a flock of rooks at a farmer's gun,
Night's dreams and terrors, every one,
Fled from the brains which are their prey,
From the lamp's death to the morning ray.

All rose to do the task He set to each,
Who shaped us to his ends and not our own;
The million rose to learn, and one to teach
What none yet ever knew or can be known;

And many rose
Whose woe was such that fear became desire;—
Melchior and Lionel were not among those;
They from the throng of men had stepp'd aside,
And made their home under the green hill side.
It was that hill, whose intervening brow
Screens Lucca from the Pisan's envious eye,
Which the circumfluous plain waving below,
Like a wide lake of green fertility,
With streams and fields and marshes bare,
Divides from the far Apennines—which lie
Islanded in the immeasurable air.

« What think you, as she lies in her green cove,
Our little sleeping boat is dreaming of?
If morning dreams are true, why I should guess
That she was dreaming of our idleness,
And of the miles of watery way
We should have led her by this time of day?»

————« Never mind,» said Lionel,
« Give care to the winds, they can bear it well
About yon poplar tops; and see,
The white clouds are driving merrily,
And the stars we miss this morn will light
More willingly our return to-night.—
List, my dear fellow, the breeze blows fair;
How it scatters Dominic's long black hair,
Singing of us, and our lazy motions,
If I can guess a boat's emotions.—»

The chain is loosed, the sails are spread,
The living breath is fresh behind,
As with dews and sunrise fed,
Comes the laughing morning wind;—
The sails are full, the boat makes head
Against the Serchio's torrent fierce,
Then flags with intermitting course,
And hangs upon the wave, [ ]
Which fervid from its mountain source
Shallow, smooth and strong doth come,—
Swift as fire, tempestuously
It sweeps into the affrighted sea;
In morning's smile its eddies coil,
Its billows sparkle, toss and boil,
Torturing all its quiet light
Into columns fierce and bright.

The Serchio, twisting forth
Between the marble barriers which it clove
At Ripafratta, leads through the dread chasm
The wave that died the death that lovers love,
Living in what it sought; as if this spasm
Had not yet past, the toppling mountains cling,
But the clear stream in full enthusiasm
Pours itself on the plain, until wandering,
Down one clear path of effluence crystalline
Sends its clear waves, that they may fling
At Arno's feet tribute of corn and wine,
Then, through the pestilential deserts wild
Of tangled marsh and woods of stunted fir,
It rushes to the Ocean.

July, 1821.

THE ZUCCA. [1]

I.

Summer was dead and Autumn was expiring,
And infant Winter laugh'd upon the land

[1] Pumpkin.

All cloudlessly and cold;—when I, desiring
More in this world than any understand,
Wept o'er the beauty, which, like sea retiring,
Had left the earth bare as the wave-worn sand
Of my poor heart, and o'er the grass and flowers
Pale for the falsehood of the flattering hours.

II.

Summer was dead, but I yet lived to weep
The instability of all but weeping;
And on the earth lull'd in her winter sleep
I woke, and envied her as she was sleeping.
Too happy Earth! over thy face shall creep
The wakening vernal airs, until thou, leaping
From unremember'd dreams, shalt [ ] see
No death divide thy immortality.

III.

I loved—O no, I mean not one of ye,
Or any earthly one, though ye are dear
As human heart to human heart may be;—
I loved, I know not what—but this low sphere,
And all that it contains, contains not thee,
Thou, whom seen no where, I feel everywhere,
Dim object of my soul's idolatry.
Veiled art thou like—

IV.

By Heaven and Earth, from all whose shapes thou flowest,
Neither to be contain'd, delay'd, or hidden,
Making divine the loftiest and the lowest,
When for a moment thou art not forbidden
To live within the life which thou bestowest;
And leaving noblest things vacant and chidden,
Cold as a corpse after the spirit's flight,
Blank as the sun after the birth of night.

V.

In winds, and trees, and streams, and all things common,
In music and the sweet unconscious tone
Of animals, and voices which are human,
Meant to express some feelings of their own;
In the soft motions and rare smile of woman,
In flowers and leaves, and in the fresh grass shown,
Or dying in the autumn, I the most
Adore thee present or lament thee lost.

VI.

And thus I went lamenting, when I saw
A plant upon the river's margin lie,
Like one who loved beyond his Nature's law,
And in despair had cast him down to die;
Its leaves which had outlived the frost, the thaw
Had blighted as a heart which hatred's eye
Can blast not, but which pity kills; the dew
Lay on its spotted leaves like tears too true.

VII.

The Heavens had wept upon it, but the Earth
Had crush'd it on her unmaternal breast.
* * * * * * *

VIII.

I bore it to my chamber, and I planted
It in a vase full of the lightest mould;
The winter beams which out of Heaven slanted
Fell through the window panes, disrobed of cold,
Upon its leaves and flowers; the star which panted
In evening for the Day, whose car has roll'd
Over the horizon's wave, with looks of light
Smiled on it from the threshold of the night.

IX.

The mitigated influences of air
And light revived the plant, and from it grew
Strong leaves and tendrils, and its flowers fair,
Full as a cup with the vine's burning dew,
O'erflowed with golden colours; an atmosphere
Of vital warmth infolded it anew,
And every impulse sent to every part
The unbeheld pulsations of its heart.

X.

Well might the plant grow beautiful and strong,
Even if the sun and air had smiled not on it;
For one wept o'er it all the winter long
Tears pure as Heaven's rain, which fell upon it
Hour after hour; for sounds of softest song,
Mix'd with the stringed melodies that won it
To leave the gentle lips on which it slept,
Had loosed the heart of him who sat and wept.

XI.

Had loosed his heart, and shook the leaves and flowers
On which he wept, the while the savage storm,
Waked by the darkest of December's hours,
Was raving round the chamber hush'd and warm;
The birds were shivering in their leafless bowers,
The fish were frozen in the pools, the form
Of every summer plant was dead [ ]
Whilst this * * *

January, 1822.

THE TWO SPIRITS.

AN ALLEGORY.

FIRST SPIRIT.

Oh thou, who plumed with strong desire
Would float above the earth, beware!
A Shadow tracks thy flight of fire—
Night is coming!
Bright are the regions of the air,
And among the winds and beams
It were delight to wander there—
Night is coming!

SECOND SPIRIT.

The deathless stars are bright above;
If I would cross the shade of night,
Within my heart is the lamp of love,
And that is day!
And the moon will smile with gentle light
On my golden plumes where'er they move;
The meteors will linger round my flight,
And make night day.

FIRST SPIRIT.

But if the whirlwinds of darkness waken
Hail and lightning and stormy rain?
See, the bounds of the air are shaken—
Night is coming!

The red swift clouds of the hurricane
Yon declining sun have overtaken,
The clash of the hail sweeps over the plain—
Night is coming!

SECOND SPIRIT.

I see the light, and I hear the sound;
I'll sail on the flood of the tempest dark
With the calm within and the light around
Which makes night day:
And thou, when the gloom is deep and stark,
Look from thy dull earth, slumber-bound,
My moon-like flight thou then mayst mark
On high, far away.

Some say, there is a precipice
Where one vast pine is frozen to ruin
O'er piles of snow and chasms of ice
Mid Alpine mountains;
And that the languid storm, pursuing
That winged shape, for ever flies
Round those hoar branches, aye renewing
Its aery fountains.

Some say, when nights are dry and clear,
And the death dews sleep on the morass,
Sweet whispers are heard by the traveller
Which makes night day:
And a silver shape like his early love doth pass
Upborne by her wild and glittering hair,
And when he awakes on the fragrant grass,
He finds night day.

A FRAGMENT.

They were two cousins, almost like to twins,
Except that from the catalogue of sins
Nature had razed their love—which could not be
But by dissevering their nativity.
And so they grew together, like two flowers
Upon one stem, which the same beams and showers
Lull or awaken in their purple prime,
Which the same hand will gather—the same clime
Shake with decay. This fair day smiles to see
All those who love,—and who ever loved like thee,
Fiordispina? Scarcely Cosimo,
Within whose bosom and whose brain now glow
The ardours of a vision which obscure
The very idol of its portraiture;
He faints, dissolved into a sense of love;
But thou art as a planet sphered above,
But thou art Love itself—ruling the motion
Of his subjected spirit.—Such emotion
Must end in sin or sorrow, if sweet May
Had not brought forth this morn—your wedding-day.

A BRIDAL SONG.

The golden gates of sleep unbar
Where strength and beauty met together,
Kindle their image like a star
In a sea of glassy weather.
Night, with all thy stars look down,—
Darkness, weep thy holiest dew,—
Never smiled the inconstant moon
On a pair so true.
Let eyes not see their own delight;—
Haste, swift Hour, and thy flight
Oft renew.

Fairies, sprites, and angels keep her!
Holy stars, permit no wrong!
And return to wake the sleeper,
Dawn,—ere it be long.
Oh joy! oh fear! what will be done
In the absence of the sun!
Come along!

THE SUNSET.

There late was One within whose subtle being,
As light and wind within some delicate cloud
That fades amid the blue noon's burning sky,
Genius and youth contended. None may know
The sweetness of the joy which made his breath
Fail, like the trances of a summer air,
When, with the Lady of his love, who then
First knew the unreserve of mingled being,
He walk'd along the pathway of the field
Which to the east a hoar wood shadow'd o'er,
But to the west was open to the sky.
There now the sun had sunk, but lines of gold
Hung on the ashen clouds, and on the points
Of the far level grass and nodding flowers,
And the old dandelion's hoary beard,
And, mingled with the shades of twilight, lay
On the brown massy woods—and in the east
The broad and burning moon lingeringly rose
Between the black trunks of the crowded trees,
While the faint stars were gathering overhead.—
«Is it not strange, Isabel,» said the youth,
«I never saw the sun? We will walk here
To-morrow; thou shalt look on it with me.»

That night the youth and lady mingled lay
In love and sleep—but when the morning came
The lady found her lover dead and cold.
Let none believe that God in mercy gave
That stroke. The lady died not, nor grew wild,
But year by year lived on—in truth I think
Her gentleness and patience and sad smiles,
And that she did not die, but lived to tend
Her aged father, were a kind of madness,
If madness 't is to be unlike the world.
For but to see her were to read the tale
Woven by some subtlest bard, to make hard hearts
Dissolve away in wisdom-working grief;—
Her eye-lashes were worn away with tears,
Her lips and cheeks were like things dead—so pale;
Her hands were thin, and through their wandering veins
And weak articulations might be seen
Day's ruddy light. The tomb of thy dead self
Which one vex'd ghost inhabits, night and day,
Is all, lost child, that now remains of thee!

«Inheritor of more than earth can give,
Passionless calm, and silence unreproved,
Whether the dead find, oh, not sleep! but rest,

And are the uncomplaining things they seem,
Or live, or drop in the deep sea of Love;
Oh that like thine, mine epitaph were—Peace!'
This was the only moan she ever made.
1816.

SONG.

ON A FADED VIOLET.

The odour from the flower is gone,
Which like thy kisses breathed on me;
The colour from the flower is flown,
Which glow'd of thee, and only thee!

A shrivell'd, lifeless, vacant form,
It lies on my abandon'd breast,
And mocks the heart which yet is warm
With cold and silent rest.

I weep—my tears revive it not!
I sigh—it breathes no more on me;
Its mute and uncomplaining lot
Is such as mine should be.

LINES TO A CRITIC.

Honey from silk-wórms who can gather,
Or silk from the yellow bee?
The grass may grow in winter weather
As soon as hate in me.

Hate men who cant, and men who pray,
And men who rail like thee:
An equal passion to repay
They are not coy like me.

Or seek some slave of power and gold,
To be thy dear heart's mate;
Thy love will move that bigot cold,
Sooner than me thy hate.

A passion like the one I prove
Cannot divided be;
I hate thy want of truth and love—
How should I then hate thee?
December, 1817.

GOOD NIGHT.

Good night? ah! no; the hour is ill
Which severs those it should unite;
Let us remain together still,
Then it will be *good* night.

How can I call the lone night good,
Though thy sweet wishes wing its flight?
Be it not said, thought, understood,
Then it will be *good* night.

To hearts which near each other move
From evening close to morning light,
The night is good; because, my love,
They never *say* good night.

TO-MORROW.

Where art thou, beloved To-morrow?
Whom young and old and strong and weak,
Rich and poor, through joy and sorrow,
Thy sweet smiles we ever seek:—
In thy place—ah! well-a-day!
We find the thing we fled—To-day.

DEATH.

They die—the dead return not—Misery
Sits near an open grave and calls them over,
A Youth with hoary hair and haggard eye—
They are the names of kindred, friend, and lover,
Which he so feebly call'd—they all are gone!
Fond wretch, all dead, those vacant names alone,
This most familiar scene, my pain—
These tombs alone remain.

Misery, my sweetest friend—oh! weep no more!
Thou wilt not be consoled—I wonder not!
For I have seen thee from thy dwelling's door
Watch the calm sunset with them, and this spot
Was even as bright and calm, but transitory,
And now thy hopes are gone, thy hair is hoary;
This most familiar scene, my pain—
These tombs alone remain.

A LAMENT.

Oh, world! oh, life! oh, time!
On whose last steps I climb,
Trembling at that where I had stood before;
When will return the glory of your prime?
No more—O, never more!

Out of the day and night
A joy has taken flight;
Fresh spring, and summer, and winter hoar,
Move my faint heart with grief, but with delight
No more—O, never more!

LOVE'S PHILOSOPHY.

The fountains mingle with the river,
And the rivers with the ocean;
The winds of heaven mix for ever
With a sweet emotion;
Nothing in the world is single;
All things by a law divine
In one another's being mingle—
Why not I with thine?

See the mountains kiss high heaven,
And the waves clasp one another;
No sister flower would be forgiven
If it disdain'd its brother:
And the sunlight clasps the earth,
And the moonbeams kiss the sea,
What are all these kissings worth,
If thou kiss not me?
January, 1820.

TO E*** V***.

Madonna, wherefore hast thou sent to me
Sweet basil and mignionette?
Embleming love and health, which never yet
In the same wreath might be.
Alas, and they are wet!
Is it with thy kisses or thy tears?
For never rain or dew
Such fragrance drew
From plant or flower—the very doubt endears
My sadness ever new,
The sighs I breathe, the tears I shed for thee.
March, 1821.

TO ———.

I fear thy kisses, gentle maiden,
Thou needest not fear mine;
My spirit is too deeply laden
Ever to burthen thine.

I fear thy mien, thy tones, thy motion,
Thou needest not fear mine;
Innocent is the heart's devotion
With which I worship thine.

LINES.

When the lamp is shatter'd,
The light in the dust lies dead—
When the cloud is scatter'd,
The rainbow's glory is shed.
When the lute is broken,
Sweet tones are remember'd not;
When the lips have spoken,
Loved accents are soon forgot.

As music and splendour
Survive not the lamp and the lute,
The heart's echoes render
No song when the spirit is mute:—
No song but sad dirges,
Like the wind through a ruin'd cell,
Or the mournful surges
That ring the dead seaman's knell.

When hearts have once mingled,
Love first leaves the well-built nest;
The weak one is singled
To endure what it once possest.
O, Love! who bewailest
The frailty of all things here,
Why chuse you the frailest
For your cradle, your home and your bier?

Its passions will rock thee,
As the storms rock the ravens on high:
Bright reason will mock thee,
Like the sun from a wintry sky.
From thy nest every rafter
Will rot, and thine eagle home
Leave the naked to laughter,
When leaves fall and cold winds come.

TO WILLIAM SHELLEY.

(With what truth I may say—
Roma! Roma! Roma!
Non è più come era prima!)

My lost William, thou in whom
Some bright spirit lived, and did
That decaying robe consume
Which its lustre faintly hid,
Here its ashes find a tomb;
But beneath this pyramid
Thou art not—if a thing divine
Like thee can die, thy funeral shrine
Is thy mother's grief and mine.

Where art thou, my gentle child?
Let me think thy spirit feeds,
Within its life intense and mild,
The love of living leaves and weeds,
Among these tombs and ruins wild;—
Let me think that through low seeds
Of the sweet flowers and sunny grass,
Into their hues and scents may pass
A portion——
June, 1819.

AN ALLEGORY.

A portal as of shadowy adamant
Stands yawning on the highway of the life
Which we all tread, a cavern huge and gaunt;
Around it rages an unceasing strife
Of shadows, like the restless clouds that haunt
The gap of some cleft mountain, lifted high
Into the whirlwinds of the upper sky.

And many pass'd it by with careless tread,
Not knowing that a shadowy [ ]
Tracks every traveller even to where the dead
Wait peacefully for their companion new;
But others, by more curious humour led,
Pause to examine,—these are very few,
And they learn little there, except to know
That shadows follow them where'er they go.

MUTABILITY.

The flower that smiles to-day
To-morrow dies;
All that we wish to stay,
Tempts and then flies:
What is this world's delight?
Lightning that mocks the night,
Brief even as bright.

Virtue, how frail it is!
Friendship too rare!
Love, how it sells poor bliss
For proud despair!
But we, though soon they fall,
Survive their joy and all
Which ours we call.

Whilst skies are blue and bright,
Whilst flowers are gay,
Whilst eyes that change ere night
Make glad the day;
Whilst yet the calm hours creep,
Dream thou—and from thy sleep
Then wake to weep.

FROM THE ARABIC.

AN IMITATION.

My faint spirit was sitting in the light
Of thy looks, my love;
It panted for thee like the hind at noon
For the brooks, my love.
Thy barb, whose hoofs outspeed the tempest's flight,
Bore thee far from me;
My heart, for my weak feet were weary soon,
Did companion thee.

Ah! fleeter far than fleetest storm or steed,
Or the death they bear,
The heart which tender thought clothes like a dove
With the wings of care;
In the battle, in the darkness, in the need,
Shall mine cling to thee,
Nor claim one smile for all the comfort, love,
It may bring to thee.

TO ———.

One word is too often profaned
For me to profane it,
One feeling too falsely disdain'd
For thee to disdain it.
One hope is too like despair
For prudence to smother,
And Pity from thee more dear
Than that from another.

I can give not what men call love;
But wilt thou accept not
The worship the heart lifts above,
And the Heavens reject not—
The desire of the moth for the star,
Of the night for the morrow,
The devotion to something afar
From the sphere of our sorrow?

MUSIC.

I pant for the music which is divine,
My heart in its thirst is a dying flower;
Pour forth the sound like enchanted wine,
Loosen the notes in a silver shower;
Like a herbless plain, for the gentle rain,
I gasp, I faint, till they wake again.

Let me drink of the spirit of that sweet sound,
More, O more,—I am thirsting yet,
It loosens the serpent which care has bound
Upon my heart to stifle it;
The dissolving strain, through every vein,
Passes into my heart and brain.

As the scent of a violet wither'd up,
Which grew by the brink of a silver lake;
When the hot noon has drain'd its dewy cup,
And mist there was none its thirst to slake—
And the violet lay dead while the odour flew
On the wings of the wind o'er the waters blue—

As one who drinks from a charmed cup
Of foaming, and sparkling, and murmuring wine,
Whom, a mighty Enchantress filling up,
Invites to love with her kiss divine.
* * * * * *
* * * * * *

NOVEMBER, 1815.

The cold earth slept below,
Above the cold sky shone;
And all around,
With a chilling sound,
From caves of ice and fields of snow,
The breath of night like death did flow
Beneath the sinking moon.

The wintry hedge was black,
The green grass was not seen,
The birds did rest
On the bare thorn's breast,
Whose roots, beside the pathway track,
Had bound their folds o'er many a crack
Which the frost had made between.

Thine eyes glow'd in the glare
Of the moon's dying light;
As a fen-fire's beam,
On a sluggish stream,
Gleams dimly—so the moon shone there,
And it yellow'd the strings of thy tangled hair
That shook in the wind of night.

The moon made thy lips pale, beloved;
The wind made thy bosom chill:
The night did shed
On thy dear head
Its frozen dew, and thou didst lie
Where the bitter breath of the naked sky
Might visit thee at will.

DEATH.

Death is here, and death is there,
Death is busy every where,
All around, within, beneath,
Above is death—and we are death.

Death has set his mark and seal
On all we are and all we feel,
On all we know and all we fear,
* * * * *

First our pleasures die—and then
Our hopes, and then our fears—and when
These are dead, the debt is due,
Dust claims dust—and we die too.

All things that we love and cherish,
Like ourselves, must fade and perish;
Such is our rude mortal lot—
Love itself would, did they not.

TO ———.

When passion's trance is overpast,
If tenderness and truth could last
Or live, whilst all wild feelings keep
Some mortal slumber, dark and deep,
I should not weep, I should not weep!

It were enough to feel, to see
Thy soft eyes gazing tenderly,
And dream the rest—and burn and be
The secret food of fires unseen,
Couldst thou but be as thou hast been.

After the slumber of the year
The woodland violets re-appear;
All things revive in field or grove,
And sky and sea, but two, which move,
And for all others, life and love.

PASSAGE OF THE APENNINES.

Listen, listen, Mary mine,
To the whisper of the Apennine,
It bursts on the roof like the thunder's roar,
Or like the sea on a northern shore,
Heard in its raging ebb and flow
By the captives pent in the cave below.
The Apennine in the light of day
Is a mighty mountain dim and grey,
Which between the earth and sky doth lay;
But when night comes, a chaos dread
On the dim star-light then is spread,
And the Apennine walks abroad with the storm.

May 4th, 1818.

TO MARY ———.

Oh! Mary dear, that you were here
With your brown eyes bright and clear,
And your sweet voice, like a bird
Singing love to its lone mate
In the ivy bower disconsolate;
Voice the sweetest ever heard!
And your brow more * * *
Than the * * * sky
Of this azure Italy.
Mary dear, come to me soon,
I am not well whilst thou art far;—
As sunset to the sphered moon,
As twilight to the western star,
Thou, beloved, art to me.

Oh! Mary dear, that you were here;
The Castle echo whispers «Here!»

Este, September, 1818.

THE PAST.

Wilt thou forget the happy hours
Which we buried in Love's sweet bowers,
Heaping over their corpses cold
Blossoms and leaves, instead of mould?
Blossoms which were the joys that fell,
And leaves, the hopes that yet remain.

Forget the dead, the past? O yet
There are ghosts that may take revenge for it.
Memories that make the heart a tomb,
Regrets which glide through the spirit's gloom,
And with ghastly whispers tell
That joy, once lost, is pain.

SONG OF A SPIRIT.

Within the silent centre of the earth
My mansion is; where I lived insphered
From the beginning, and around my sleep
Have woven all the wondrous imagery
Of this dim spot, which mortals call the world;
Infinite depths of unknown elements
Mass'd into one impenetrable mask;
Sheets of immeasurable fire, and veins
Of gold and stone, and adamantine iron.
And as a veil in which I walk through Heaven
I have wrought mountains, seas, and waves, and clouds,
And lastly light, whose interfusion dawns
In the dark space of interstellar air.

LIBERTY.

The fiery mountains answer each other;
Their thunderings are echoed from zone to zone;
The tempestuous oceans awake one another,
And the ice-rocks are shaken round winter's zone,
When the clarion of the Typhoon is blown.

From a single cloud the lightning flashes,
Whilst a thousand isles are illumined around,
Earthquake is trampling one city to ashes,
An hundred are shuddering and tottering; the sound
Is bellowing underground.

But keener thy gaze than the lightning's glare,
And swifter thy step than the earthquake's tramp;
Thou deafenest the rage of the ocean; thy stare
Makes blind the volcanoes; the sun's bright lamp
To thine is a fen-fire damp.

From billow and mountain and exhalation
The sunlight is darted through vapour and blast;
From spirit to spirit, from nation to nation,
From city to hamlet thy dawning is cast,—
And tyrants and slaves are like shadows of night
In the van of the morning light.

TO ———.

Mine eyes were dim with tears unshed;
Yes, I was firm—thus did not thou;—
My baffled looks did fear, yet dread,
To meet thy looks—I could not know
How anxiously they sought to shine
With soothing pity upon mine.

To sit and curb the soul's mute rage
Which preys upon itself alone;
To curse the life which is the cage
Of fetter'd grief that dares not groan,
Hiding from many a careless eye
The scorned load of agony.

Whilst thou alone, then not regarded,
The [ ] thou alone should be,
To spend years thus, and be rewarded,
As thou, sweet love, requited me
When none were near—Oh! I did wake
From torture for that moment's sake.

Upon my heart thy accents sweet
Of peace and pity, fell like dew
On flowers half dead;—thy lips did meet
Mine tremblingly; thy dark eyes threw
Thy soft persuasion on my brain,
Charming away its dream of pain.

We are not happy, sweet! our state
Is strange and full of doubt and fear;
More need of words that ills abate;—
Reserve or censure come not near
Our sacred friendship, lest there be
No solace left for thou and me.

Gentle and good and mild thou art,
Nor I can live if thou appear
Aught but thyself, or turn thine heart
Away from me, or stoop to wear
The mask of scorn, although it be
To hide the love thou feel for me.

THE ISLE.

There was a little lawny islet
By anemone and violet,
Like mosaic, paven:
And its roof was flowers and leaves
Which the summer's breath enweaves,
Where nor sun nor showers nor breeze
Pierce the pines and tallest trees,
Each a gem engraven:
Girt by many an azure wave
With which the clouds and mountains pave
A lake's blue chasm.

TO ———.

Music, when soft voices die,
Vibrates in the memory—
Odours, when sweet violets sicken,
Live within the sense they quicken.

Rose-leaves, when the rose is dead,
Are heap'd for the beloved's bed;
And so thy thoughts, when thou art gone,
Love itself shall slumber on.

TIME.

Unfathomable Sea! whose waves are years,
Ocean of Time, whose waters of deep woe
Are brackish with the salt of human tears!
Thou shoreless flood, which in thy ebb and flow
Claspest the limits of mortality!
And sick of prey, yet howling on for more,
Vomitest thy wrecks on its inhospitable shore,
Treacherous in calm, and terrible in storm,
Who shall put forth on thee,
Unfathomable Sea?

LINES.

That time is dead forever, child,
Drown'd, frozen, dead forever!
We look on the past,
And stare aghast
At the spectres wailing, pale and ghast,
Of hopes which thou and I beguiled
To death on life's dark river.

The stream we gazed on then, rolled by;
Its waves are unreturning;
But we yet stand
In a lone land,
Like tombs to mark the memory
Of hopes and fears, which fade and flee
In the light of life's dim morning.

November 5th, 1817.

A SONG.

A widow bird sate mourning for her love
Upon a wintry bough;
The frozen wind kept on above,
The freezing stream below.

There was no leaf upon the forest bare,
No flower upon the ground,
And little motion in the air,
Except the mill-wheel's sound.

THE WORLD'S WANDERERS.

Tell me, thou star, whose wings of light
Speed thee in thy fiery flight,
In what cavern of the night
Will thy pinions close now?

Tell me, moon, thou pale and grey
Pilgrim of heaven's homeless way,
In what depth of night or day
Seekest thou repose now?

Weary wind, who wanderest
Like the world's rejected guest,
Hast thou still some secret nest
On the tree or billow?

A DIRGE.

Rough wind, that moanest loud
Grief too sad for song;
Wild wind, when sullen cloud
Knells all the night long;
Sad storm, whose tears are vain,
Bare woods, whose branches stain,
Deep caves and dreary main,
Wail, for the world's wrong!

LINES.

Far, far away, O ye
Halcyons of memory,
Seek some far calmer nest
Than this abandon'd breast;—
No news of your false spring
To my heart's winter bring,
Once having gone, in vain
Ye come again.

Vultures, who build your bowers
High in the Future's towers,
Wither'd hopes on hopes are spread,
Dying joys choked by the dead,
Will serve your beaks for prey
Many a day.

SUPERSTITION.

Thou taintest all thou look'st upon! The stars,
Which on thy cradle beam'd so brightly sweet,
Were gods to the distemper'd playfulness
Of thy untutor'd infancy; the trees,
The grass, the clouds, the mountains, and the sea,
All living things that walk, swim, creep, or fly,
Were gods: the sun had homage, and the moon
Her worshipper. Then thou becamest, a boy,
More daring in thy frenzies: every shape,
Monstrous or vast, or beautifully wild,
Which, from sensation's relics, fancy culls;
The spirits of the air, the shuddering ghost,
The genii of the elements, the powers
That give a shape to nature's varied works,
Had life and place in the corrupt belief
Of thy blind heart: yet still thy youthful hands
Were pure of human blood. Then manhood gave
Its strength and ardour to thy frenzied brain;
Thine eager gaze scann'd the stupendous scene,
Whose wonders mock'd the knowledge of thy pride:
Their everlasting and unchanging laws
Reproach'd thine ignorance. Awhile thou stoodest
Baffled and gloomy; then thou didst sum up
The elements of all that thou didst know;
The changing seasons, winter's leafless reign,
The budding of the heaven-breathing trees,
The eternal orbs that beautify the night,
The sun-rise, and the setting of the moon,
Earthquakes and wars, and poisons and disease,
And all their causes, to an abstract point
Converging, thou didst give it name, and form,
Intelligence, and unity, and power,

O! THERE ARE SPIRITS.

ΔΑΚΡΥΕΙ ΔΙΟΙΣΩ ΠΟΤΜΟΝ ΑΠΟΤΜΟΝ.

O! there are spirits of the air,
And genii of the evening breeze,
And gentle ghosts, with eyes as fair
As star-beams among twilight trees:—
Such lovely ministers to meet
Oft hast thou turn'd from men thy lonely feet.

With mountain winds, and babbling springs,
And moonlight seas, that are the voice
Of these inexplicable things,
Thou didst hold commune, and rejoice
When they did answer thee; but they
Cast, like a worthless boon, thy love away.

And thou hast sought in starry eyes
Beams that were never meant for thine,
Another's wealth;—tame sacrifice
To a fond faith! still dost thou pine?
Still dost thou hope that greeting hands,
Voice, looks, or lips, may answer thy demands?

Ah! wherefore didst thou build thine hope
On the false earth's inconstancy?
Did thine own mind afford no scope
Of love, or moving thoughts to thee?
That natural scenes or human smiles
Could steal the power to wind thee in their wiles.

Yes, all the faithless smiles are fled
Whose falsehood left thee broken-hearted;
The glory of the moon is dead;
Night's ghost and dreams have now departed;
Thine own soul still is true to thee,
But changed to a foul fiend through misery.

This fiend, whose ghastly presence ever
Beside thee like thy shadow hangs,
Dream not to chase;—the mad endeavour
Would scourge thee to severer pangs.
Be as thou art. Thy settled fate,
Dark as it is, all change would aggravate.

STANZAS.—APRIL, 1814.

Away! the moor is dark beneath the moon,
Rapid clouds have drunk the last pale beam of even:
Away! the gathering winds will call the darkness soon,
And profoundest midnight shroud the serene lights of heaven.
Pause not! The time is past! Every voice cries, Away!
Tempt not with one last glance thy friend's ungentle mood:
Thy lover's eye, so glazed and cold, dares not entreat thy stay:
Duty and dereliction guide thee back to solitude.

Away, away! to thy sad and silent home;
Pour bitter tears on its desolated hearth;
Watch the dim shades as like ghosts they go and come,
And complicate strange webs of melancholy mirth.
The leaves of wasted autumn woods shall float around thine head;
The blooms of dewy spring shall gleam beneath thy feet:
But thy soul or this world must fade in the frost that binds the dead,
Ere midnight's frown and morning's smile, ere thou and peace may meet.

The cloud shadows of midnight possess their own repose,
For the weary winds are silent, or the moon is in the deep:
Some respite to its turbulence unresting ocean knows:
Whatever moves, or toils, or grieves, hath its appointed sleep.

Thou in the grave shalt rest—yet till the phantoms flee
  Which that house and heath and garden made dear to thee erewhile,
Thy remembrance, and repentance, and deep musings are not free
  From the music of two voices, and the light of one sweet smile.

MUTABILITY.

We are as clouds that veil the midnight moon;
  How restlessly they speed, and gleam, and quiver,
Streaking the darkness radiantly!—yet soon
  Night closes round, and they are lost for ever:

Or like forgotten lyres, whose dissonant strings
  Give various response to each varying blast,
To whose frail frame no second motion brings
  One mood or modulation like the last.

We rest—A dream has power to poison sleep;
  We rise—One wandering thought pollutes the day;
We feel, conceive or reason, laugh or weep;
  Embrace fond woe, or cast our cares away:

It is the same!—For, be it joy or sorrow,
  The path of its departure still is free:
Man's yesterday may ne'er be like his morrow;
  Nought may endure but Mutability.

ON DEATH.

There is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest.—*Ecclesiastes.*

The pale, the cold, and the moony smile
  Which the meteor beam of a starless night
Sheds on a lonely and sea-girt isle,
  Ere the dawning of morn's undoubted light,
Is the flame of life so fickle and wan
That flits round our steps till their strength is gone.

O man! hold thee on in courage of soul
  Through the stormy shades of thy worldly way,
And the billows of cloud that around thee roll
  Shall sleep in the light of a wondrous day,
Where hell and heaven shall leave thee free
To the universe of destiny.

This world is the nurse of all we know,
  This world is the mother of all we feel,
And the coming of death is a fearful blow
  To a brain unencompass'd with nerves of steel;
When all that we know, or feel, or see,
Shall pass like an unreal mystery.

The secret things of the grave are there,
  Where all but this frame must surely be,
Though the fine-wrought eye and the wondrous ear
  No longer will live, to hear or to see
All that is great and all that is strange
In the boundless realm of unending change.

Who telleth a tale of unspeaking death?
  Who lifteth the veil of what is to come?
Who painteth the shadows that are beneath
  The wide-winding caves of the peopled tomb?
Or uniteth the hopes of what shall be
With the fears and the love for that which we see?

A SUMMER-EVENING CHURCH-YARD, LECHDALE, GLOUCESTERSHIRE.

The wind has swept from the wide atmosphere
  Each vapour that obscured the sun-set's ray,
And pallid evening twines its beamy hair
  In duskier braids around the languid eyes of day:
Silence and twilight, unbeloved of men,
Creep hand in hand from yon obscurest glen.

They breathe their spells towards the departing day,
Encompassing the earth, air, stars, and sea;
Light, sound, and motion, own the potent sway,
Responding to the charm with its own mystery.
The winds are still, or the dry church-tower grass
Knows not their gentle motions as they pass.

Thou too, aërial pile! whose pinnacles
  Point from one shrine like pyramids of fire,
Obeyest in silence their sweet solemn spells,
  Clothing in hues of heaven thy dim and distant spire,
Around whose lessening and invisible height
Gather among the stars the clouds of night.

The dead are sleeping in their sepulchres:
  And, mouldering as they sleep, a thrilling sound,
Half sense, half thought, among the darkness stirs,
  Breathed from their wormy beds all living things around,
And, mingling with the still night and mute sky,
Its awful hush is felt inaudibly.

Thus solemnized and soften'd, death is mild
  And terrorless as this serenest night:
Here could I hope, like some inquiring child
  Sporting on graves, that death did hide from human sight
Sweet secrets, or beside its breathless sleep
That loveliest dreams perpetual watch did keep.

LINES

WRITTEN ON HEARING THE NEWS OF THE DEATH OF NAPOLEON.

What! alive and so bold, O earth?
Art thou not over-bold?
What! leapest thou forth as of old
In the light of thy morning mirth,
The last of the flock of the starry fold?
Ha! leapest thou forth as of old?
Are not the limbs still when the ghost is fled,
And canst thou more, Napoleon being dead?

How! is not thy quick heart cold?
What spark is alive on thy hearth?
How! is not *his* death-knell knoll'd?
And livest *thou* still, mother Earth?

Thou wert warming thy fingers old
O'er the embers cover'd and cold
Of that most fiery spirit, when it fled—
What, mother, do you laugh now he is dead?

«Who has known me of old,» replied Earth,
«Or who has my story told?
It is thou who art over-bold.»
And the lightning of scorn laugh'd forth
As she sung, «To my bosom I fold
All my sons when their knell is knoll'd,
And so with living motion all are fed,
And the quick spring like weeds out of the dead.»

«Still alive and still bold,» shouted Earth,
«I grow bolder, and still more bold.
The dead fill me ten thousand fold
Fuller of speed, and splendour, and mirth;
I was cloudy, and sullen, and cold,
Like a frozen chaos uproll'd,
Till by the spirit of the mighty dead
My heart grew warm. I feed on whom I fed.»

«Ay, alive and bold,» mutter'd Earth,
«Napoleon's fierce spirit roll'd,
In terror, and blood, and gold,
A torrent of ruin to death from his birth.
Leave the millions who follow to mould
The metal before it be cold;
And weave into his shame, which like the dead
Shrouds me, the hopes that from his glory fled.»

SUMMER AND WINTER.

It was a bright and cheerful afternoon,
Towards the end of the sunny month of June,
When the north wind congregates in crowds
The floating mountains of the silver clouds
From the horizon—and the stainless sky
Opens beyond them like eternity.
All things rejoiced beneath the sun, the weeds,
The river, and the corn-fields, and the reeds;
The willow leaves that glanced in the light breeze,
And the firm foliage of the larger trees.

It was a winter, such as when birds die
In the deep forests; and the fishes lie
Stiffen'd in the translucent ice, which makes
Even the mud and slime of the warm lakes
A wrinkled clod, as hard as brick; and when,
Among their children, comfortable men
Gather about great fires, and yet feel cold:
Alas! then for the homeless beggar old!

THE TOWER OF FAMINE.[1]

Amid the desolation of a city,
Which was the cradle, and is now the grave
Of an extinguish'd people; so that pity
Weeps o'er the shipwrecks of oblivion's wave,
There stands the Tower of Famine. It is built
Upon some prison-homes, whose dwellers rave
For bread, and gold, and blood: pain, link'd to guilt,
Agitates the light flame of their hours,
Until its vital oil is spent or spilt:
There stands the pile, a tower amid the towers
And sacred domes; each marble-ribbed roof,
The brazen-gated temples, and the bowers
Of solitary wealth! The tempest-proof
Pavilions of the dark Italian air,
Are by its presence dimm'd—they stand aloof,
And are withdrawn—so that the world is bare,
As if a spectre, wrapt in shapeless terror,
Amid a company of ladies fair
Should glide and glow, till it became a mirror
Of all their beauty, and their hair and hue,
The life of their sweet eyes, with all its error,
Should be absorb'd till they to marble grew.

[1] At Pisa there still exists the prison of Ugolino, which goes by the name of «La Torre della Fame:» in the adjoining building the galley-slaves are confined. It is situated near the Ponte al Mare on the Arno.

THE AZIOLA.

«Do you not hear the Aziola cry?
Methinks she must be nigh,»
Said Mary, as we sate
In dusk, ere stars were lit, or candles brought;
And I, who thought
This Aziola was some tedious woman,
Ask'd, «Who is Aziola?» how elate
I felt to know that it was nothing human,
No mockery of myself to fear or hate!
And Mary saw my soul,
And laugh'd and said, «Disquiet yourself not,
'T is nothing but a little downy owl.»

Sad Aziola! many an eventide
Thy music I had heard
By wood and stream, meadow and mountain side,
And fields and marshes wide,—
Such as nor voice, nor lute, nor wind, nor bird,
The soul ever stirr'd;
Unlike, and far sweeter than them all:
Sad Aziola! from that moment I
Loved thee and thy sad cry.

DIRGE FOR THE YEAR.

Orphan hours, the year is dead,
Come and sigh, come and weep!
Merry hours, smile instead,
For the year is but asleep.
See, it smiles as it is sleeping,
Mocking your untimely weeping.

As an earthquake rocks a corse
In its coffin in the clay,
So white Winter, that rough nurse,
Rocks the death-cold year to-day;
Solemn hours! wait aloud
For your mother in her shroud.

As the wild air stirs and sways
The tree-swung cradle of a child,
So the breath of these rude days
Rocks the year:—be calm and mild,
Trembling hours, she will arise
With new love within her eyes.

January grey is here,
Like a sexton by her grave;
February bears the bier,
March with grief doth howl and rave,
And April weeps—but, O ye hours,
Follow with May's fairest flowers!
January 1st, 1821.

SONNETS.

OZYMANDIAS.

I MET a traveller from an antique land
Who said: Two vast and trunkless legs of stone
Stand in the desert. Near them, on the sand,
Half sunk, a shatter'd visage lies, whose frown,
And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command,
Tell that its sculptor well those passions read
Which yet survive, stamp'd on these lifeless things,
The hand that mock'd them and the heart that fed:
And on the pedestal these words appear:
« My name is Ozymandias, king of kings:
Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!»
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare
The lone and level sands stretch far away.

YE hasten to the dead! What seek ye there,
Ye restless thoughts and busy purposes
Of the idle brain, which the world's livery wear?
O thou quick Heart, which pantest to possess
All that anticipation feigneth fair!
Thou vainly curious mind which wouldst guess
Whence thou didst come, and whither thou mayst go,
And that which never yet was known would know—
Oh, whither hasten ye that thus ye press
With such swift feet life's green and pleasant path,
Seeking alike from happiness and woe
A refuge in the cavern of grey death?
O heart, and mind, and thoughts! What thing do you
Hope to inherit in the grave below?

POLITICAL GREATNESS.

NOR happiness, nor majesty, nor fame,
Nor peace, nor strength, nor skill in arms or arts,
Shepherd those herds whom tyranny makes tame;
Verse echoes not one beating of their hearts,
History is but the shadow of their shame,
Art veils her glass, or from the pageant starts,
As to oblivion their blind millions fleet,
Staining that Heaven with obscene imagery
Of their own likeness. What are numbers knit
By force or custom? Man, who man would be,
Must rule the empire of himself; in it
Must be supreme, establishing his throne
On vanquish'd will, quelling the anarchy
Of hopes and fears, being himself alone.

ALAS! good friend, what profit can you see
In hating such a hateless thing as me?
There is no sport in hate where all the rage
Is on one side. In vain would you assuage
Your frowns upon an unresisting smile,
In which not even contempt lurks, to beguile
Your heart, by some faint sympathy of hate.
O conquer what you cannot satiate!
For to your passion I am far more coy
Than ever yet was coldest maid or boy
In winter noon. Of your antipathy
If I am the Narcissus, you are free
To pine into a sound with hating me.

LIFT not the painted veil which those who live
Call Life: though unreal shapes be pictured there,
And it but mimic all we would believe
With colours idly spread:—behind, lurk Fear
And Hope, twin destinies; who ever weave
The shadows, which the world calls substance, there.

I knew one who lifted it—he sought,
For his lost heart was tender, things to love,
But found them not, alas! nor was there aught
The world contains, the which he could approve.
Through the unheeding many he did move,
A splendour among shadows, a bright blot
Upon this gloomy scene, a Spirit that strove
For truth, and like the Preacher found it not.

TO WORDSWORTH.

POET of Nature, thou hast wept to know
That things depart which never may return:
Childhood and youth, friendship and love's first glow,
Have fled like sweet dreams, leaving thee to mourn.
These common woes I feel. One loss is mine
Which thou too feel'st; yet I alone deplore.
Thou wert as a lone star, whose light did shine
On some frail bark in winter's midnight roar:
Thou hast like to a rock-built refuge stood
Above the blind and battling multitude.
In honour'd poverty thy voice did weave
Songs consecrate to truth and liberty,—
Deserting these, thou leavest me to grieve,
Thus having been, that thou shouldst cease to be.

FEELINGS OF A REPUBLICAN ON THE FALL OF BONAPARTE.

I HATED thee, fallen tyrant! I did groan
To think that a most ambitious slave,
Like thou, shouldst dance and revel on the grave
Of Liberty. Thou mightst have built thy throne
Where it had stood even now: thou didst prefer
A frail and bloody pomp, which time has swept
In fragments towards oblivion. Massacre,
For this I pray'd, would on thy sleep have crept,
Treason and Slavery, Rapine, Fear, and Lust,
And stifled thee, their minister. I know
Too late, since thou and France are in the dust,
That Virtue owns a more eternal foe
Than force or fraud: old Custom, legal Crime,
And bloody Faith, the foulest birth of time.

DANTE ALIGHIERI TO GUIDO CAVALCANTI.

From the Italian of Dante.

GUIDO, I would that Lappo, thou, and I,
Led by some strong enchantment, might ascend

A magic ship, whose charmed sails should fly,
With winds at will, where'er our thoughts might wend,
And that no change, nor any evil chance,
Should mar our joyous voyage; but it might be,
That even satiety should still enhance
Between our hearts their strict community,
And that the bounteous wizard then would place
Vanna and Bice and my gentle love,
Companions of our wandering, and would grace
With passionate talk, wherever we might rove,
Our time, and each were as content and free
As I believe that thou and I should be.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GREEK OF MOSCHUS.

Ταν ἁλα ταν γλαυκαν ὁταν ὠνεμος ατρεμαβαλλῃ,
κ. τ. λ.

When winds that move not its calm surface sweep
The azure sea, I love the land no more,
The smiles of the serene and tranquil deep
Tempt my unquiet mind.—But when the roar
Of ocean's grey abyss resounds, and foam
Gathers upon the sea, and vast waves burst,
I turn from the drear aspect to the home
Of earth and its deep woods, where, interspersed,
When winds blow loud, pines make sweet melody.
Whose house is some lone bark, whose toil the sea,
Whose prey the wandering fish, an evil lot
Has chosen.—But I my languid limbs will fling
Beneath the plane, where the brook's murmuring
Moves the calm spirit, but disturbs it not.

TRANSLATIONS.

HYMN TO MERCURY.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GREEK OF HOMER.

I.

Sing, Muse, the son of Maia and of Jove,
The Herald-child, king of Arcadia
And all its pastoral hills, whom in sweet love
Having been interwoven, modest May
Bore Heaven's dread Supreme—an antique grove
Shadow'd the cavern where the lovers lay
In the deep night, unseen by Gods or Men,
And white-arm'd Juno slumber'd sweetly then.

II.

Now, when the joy of Jove had its fulfilling,
And Heaven's tenth moon chronicled her relief,
She gave to light a babe all babes excelling,
A schemer subtle beyond all belief;
A shepherd of thin dreams, a cow-stealing,
A night-watching, and door-waylaying thief,
Who, 'mongst the Gods was soon about to thieve,
And other glorious actions to achieve.

III.

The babe was born at the first peep of day;
He began playing on the lyre at noon,
And the same evening did he steal away
Apollo's herds;—the fourth day of the moon
On which him bore the venerable May,
From her immortal limbs he leap'd full soon,
Nor long could in the sacred cradle keep,
But out to seek Apollo's herds would creep.

IV.

Out of the lofty cavern wandering
He found a tortoise, and cried out—«A treasure!»
(For Mercury first made the tortoise sing:)
The beast before the portal at his leisure
The flowery herbage was depasturing,
Moving his feet in a deliberate measure
Over the turf. Jove's profitable son
Eyeing him laugh'd, and laughing thus begun:—

V.

«A useful god-send are you to me now,
King of the dance, companion of the feast,
Lovely in all your nature! Welcome, you
Excellent plaything! Where, sweet mountain beast,
Got you that speckled shell? Thus much I know,
You must come home with me and be my guest;
You will give joy to me, and I will do
All that is in my power to honour you.

VI.

«Better to be at home than out of door;—
So come with me, and though it has been said
That you alive defend from magic power,
I know you will sing sweetly when you're dead.»
Thus having spoken, the quaint infant bore,
Lifting it from the grass on which it fed,
And grasping it in his delighted hold,
His treasured prize into the cavern old.

VII.

Then scooping with a chisel of grey steel
He bored the life and soul out of the beast—
Not swifter a swift thought of woe or weal
Darts through the tumult of a human breast
Which thronging cares annoy—not swifter wheel
The flashes of its torture and unrest
Out of the dizzy eyes—than Maia's son
All that he did devise hath featly done.

VIII.

And through the tortoise's hard strong skin
At proper distances small holes he made,
And fasten'd the cut stems of reeds within,
And with a piece of leather overlaid
The open space and fixed the cubits in,
Fitting the bridge to both, and stretch'd o'er all
Symphonious cords of sheep-gut rhythmical.

IX.

When he had wrought the lovely instrument,
He tried the chords, and made division meet,
Preluding with the plectrum; and there went
Up from beneath his hand a tumult sweet
Of mighty sounds, and from his lips he sent
A strain of unpremeditated wit,
Joyous and wild and wanton—such you may
Hear among revellers on a holiday.

X.

He sung how Jove and May of the bright sandal
Dallied in love not quite legitimate;
And his own birth, still scoffing at the scandal,
And naming his own name, did celebrate;
His mother's cave and servant-maids he plann'd all
In plastic verse, her household stuff and state,
Perennial pot, trippet, and brazen pan,—
But singing he conceived another plan.

XI.

Seized with a sudden fancy for fresh meat,
He in his sacred crib deposited
The hollow lyre, and from the cavern sweet
Rush'd with great leaps up to the mountain's head,
Revolving in his mind some subtle feat
Of thievish craft, such as a swindler might
Devise in the lone season of dun night.

XII.

Lo! the great Sun under the ocean's bed has
Driven steeds and chariot—the child meanwhile strode
O'er the Pierian mountains clothed in shadows,
Where the immortal oxen of the God
Are pastured in the flowering unmown meadows,
And safely stall'd in a remote abode—
The archer Argicide, elate and proud,
Drove fifty from the herd, lowing aloud.

XIII.

He drove them wandering o'er the sandy way,
But, being ever mindful of his craft,
Backward and forward drove he them astray,
So that the tracks which seem'd before, were aft:
His sandals then he threw to the ocean spray,
And for each foot he wrought a kind of raft
Of tamarisk, and tamarisk-like sprigs,
And bound them in a lump with withy twigs.

XIV.

And on his feet he tied these sandals light,
The trail of whose wide leaves might not betray
His track; and then, a self-sufficing wight,
Like a man hastening on some distant way,
He from Pieria's mountain bent his flight;
But an old man perceived the infant pass
Down green Onchestus, heap'd like beds with grass.

XV.

The old man stood dressing his sunny vine:
«Halloo! old fellow with the crooked shoulder!
You grub those stumps? before they will bear wine
Methinks even you must grow a little older:
Attend, I pray, to this advice of mine,
As you would 'scape what might appal a bolder—
Seeing, see not—and hearing, hear not—and—
If you have understanding—understand.»

XVI.

So saying, Hermes roused the oxen vast;
O'er shadowy mountain and resounding dell.
And flower-paven plains, great Hermes past;
Till the black night divine, which favouring fell
Around his steps, grew grey, and morning fast
Waken'd the world to work, and from her cell
Sea-strewn, the Pallantean Moon sublime
Into her watch-tower just began to climb.

XVII.

Now to Alpheus he had driven all
The broad-forehcaded oxen of the Sun;
They came unwearied to the lofty stall,
And to the water-troughs which ever run
Through the fresh fields—and when with rush-grass tall,
Lotus and all sweet herbage, every one
Had pastured been, the great God made them move
Towards the stall in a collected drove.

XVIII.

A mighty pile of wood the God then heap'd,
And having soon conceived the mystery
Of fire, from two smooth laurel branches stript
The bark, and rubb'd them in his palms,—on high
Suddenly forth the burning vapour leapt,
And the divine child saw delightedly—
Mercury first found out for human weal
Tinder-box, matches, fire-irons, flint and steel.

XIX.

And fine dry logs and roots innumerous
He gather'd in a delve upon the ground—
And kindled them—and instantaneous
The strength of the fierce flame was breathed around:
And whilst the might of glorious Vulcan thus
Wrapt the great pile with glare and roaring sound,
Hermes dragg'd forth two heifers, lowing loud,
Close to the fire—such might was in the God.

XX.

And on the earth upon their backs he threw
The panting beasts, and roll'd them o'er and o'er,
And bored their lives out. Without more ado
He cut up fat and flesh, and down before
The fire, on spits of wood he placed the two,
Toasting their flesh and ribs, and all the gore
Pursed in the bowels; and while this was done,
He stretch'd their hides over a craggy stone.

XXI.

We mortals let an ox grow old, and then
Cut it up after long consideration,—
But joyous-minded Hermes from the glen
Drew the fat spoils to the more open station
Of a flat smooth space, and portion'd them; and when
He had by lot assign'd to each a ration
Of the twelve Gods, his mind became aware
Of all the joys which in religion are.

XXII.

For the sweet savour of the roasted meat
Tempted him, though immortal. Natheless,
He check'd his haughty will and did not eat,
Though what it cost him words can scarce express,
And every wish to put such morsels sweet
Down his most sacred throat, he did repress;
But soon within the lofty portal'd stall
He placed the fat and flesh and bones and all.

XXIII.

And every trace of the fresh butchery
And cooking, the God soon made disappear,
As if it all had vanish'd through the sky:
He burn'd the hoofs and horns and head and hair,
The insatiate fire devour'd them hungrily;
And when he saw that everything was clear,
He quench'd the coals and trampled the black dust,
And in the stream his bloody sandals toss'd.

XXIV.

All night he work'd in the serene moonshine—
But when the light of day was spread abroad,
He sought his natal mountain peaks divine.
On his long wandering, neither man nor god
Had met him, since he kill'd Apollo's kine,
Nor house-dog had bark'd at him on his road;
Now he obliquely through the key-hole past,
Like a thin mist, or an autumnal blast.

XXV.

Right through the temple of the spacious cave
He went with soft light feet—as if his tread
Fell not on earth; no sound their falling gave;
Then to his cradle he crept quick, and spread
The swaddling-clothes about him; and the knave
Lay playing with the covering of the bed
With his left hand about his knees—the right
Held his beloved tortoise-lyre tight.

XXVI.

There he lay innocent as a new-born child,
As gossips say; but though he was a god,
The goddess, his fair mother, unbeguiled,
Knew all that he had done being abroad:
"Whence come you, and from what adventure wild,
You cunning rogue, and where have you abode
All the long night, clothed in your impudence?
What have you done since you departed hence?

XXVII.

"Apollo soon will pass within this gate,
And bind your tender body in a chain
Inextricably tight, and fast as fate,
Unless you can delude the God again,
Even when within his arms—ah, runagate!
A pretty torment both for gods and men
Your father made when he made you!"—"Dear mother,"
Replied sly Hermes, "Wherefore scold and bother?

XXVIII.

"As if I were like other babes as old,
And understood nothing of what is what;
And cared at all to hear my mother scold.
I in my subtle brain a scheme have got,
Which whilst the sacred stars round Heaven are roll'd
Will profit you and me—nor shall our lot
Be as you counsel, without gifts or food
To spend our lives in this obscure abode.

XXIX.

"But we will leave this shadow-peopled cave
And live among the Gods, and pass each day
In high communion, sharing what they have
Of profuse wealth and unexhausted prey;
And from the portion which my father gave
To Phœbus, I will snatch my share away,
Which if my father will not—natheless I,
Who am the king of robbers, can but try.

XXX.

"And, if Latona's son should find me out,
I'll countermine him by a deeper plan;
I'll pierce the Pythian temple-walls, though stout,
And sack the fane of every thing I can—
Cauldrons and tripods of great worth no doubt,
Each golden cup and polish'd brazen pan,
All the wrought tapestries and garments gay."—
So they together talk'd;—meanwhile the Day

XXXI.

Ætherial born arose out of the flood
Of flowing Ocean, bearing light to men.
Apollo past toward the sacred wood,
Which from the inmost depths of its green glen
Echoes the voice of Neptune,—and there stood
On the same spot in green Onchestus then
That same old animal, the vine-dresser,
Who was employ'd hedging his vineyard there.

XXXII.

Latona's glorious Son began:—"I pray
Tell, ancient hedger of Onchestus green,
Whether a drove of kine has past this way,
All heifers with crooked horns? for they have been
Stolen from the herd in high Pieria,
Where a black bull was fed apart, between
Two woody mountains in a neighbouring glen,
And four fierce dogs watch'd there, unanimous as men.

XXXIII.

"And, what is strange, the author of this theft
Has stolen the fatted heifers every one,
But the four dogs and the black bull are left:—
Stolen they were last night at set of sun,
Of their soft beds and their sweet food bereft—
Now tell me, man born ere the world begun,
Have you seen any one pass with the cows?"—
To whom the man of overhanging brows:

XXXIV.

"My friend, it would require no common skill
Justly to speak of everything I see:
On various purposes of good or ill
Many pass by my vineyard,—and to me
'T is difficult to know the invisible
Thoughts, which in all those many minds may be:—
Thus much alone I certainly can say,
I till'd these vines till the declinc of day.

XXXV.

"And then I thought I saw, but dare not speak
With certainty of such a wondrous thing,
A child, who could not have been born a week,
Those fair-horn'd cattle closely following,
And in his hand he held a polish'd stick:
And, as on purpose, he walk'd wavering
From one side to the other of the road,
And with his face opposed the steps he trod."

XXXVI.

Apollo hearing this, past quickly on—
No winged omen could have shown more clear
That the deceiver was his father's son,
So the God wraps a purple atmosphere
Around his shoulders, and like fire is gone
To famous Pylos, seeking his kine there,
And found their track and his, yet hardly cold,
And cried—"What wonder do mine eyes behold!

XXXVII.

"Here are the footsteps of the horned herd
Turn'd back towards their fields of asphodel;—
But these! are not the tracks of beast or bird,
Grey wolf, or bear, or lion of the dell,
Or maned Centaur—sand was never stirr'd
By man or woman thus! Inexplicable!
Who with unwearied feet could e'er impress
The sand with such enormous vestiges?

XXXVIII.

"That was most strange—but this is stranger still!"
Thus having said, Phœbus impetuously
Sought high Cyllene's forest-cinctured hill,
And the deep cavern where dark shadows lie,
And where the ambrosial nymph with happy will
Bore the Saturnian's love-child, Mercury—
And a delightful odour from the dew
Of the hill pastures, at his coming, flew.

XXXIX.

And Phœbus stoop'd under the craggy roof
  Arch'd over the dark cavern:—Maia's child
Perceived that he came angry, far aloof,
  About the cows of which he had been beguiled,
And over him the fine and fragrant woof
  Of his ambrosial swaddling-clothes he piled—
As among fire-brands lies a burning spark,
Cover'd beneath the ashes cold and dark.

XL.

There, like an infant who had suck'd his fill,
  And now was newly wash'd and put to bed,
Awake, but courting sleep with weary will,
  And gather'd in a lump hands, feet, and head,
He lay, and his beloved tortoise still
  He grasp'd and held under his shoulder-blade.
Phœbus the lovely mountain-goddess knew,
Not less her subtle, swindling baby, who

XLI.

Lay swathed in his sly wiles. Round every crook
  Of the ample cavern, for his kine, Apollo
Look'd sharp; and when he saw them not, he took
  The glittering key, and open'd three great hollow
Recesses in the rock—where many a nook
  Was fill'd with the sweet food immortals swallow,
And mighty heaps of silver and of gold
Were piled within—a wonder to behold!

XLII.

And white and silver robes, all overwrought
  With cunning workmanship of tracery sweet—
Except among the Gods there can be nought
  In the wide world to be compared with it.
Latona's offspring, after having sought
  His herds in every corner, thus did greet
Great Hermes:—« Little cradled rogue, declare
Of my illustrious heifers, where they are!

XLIII.

« Speak quickly! or a quarrel between us
  Must rise, and the event will be, that I
Shall hawl you into dismal Tartarus,
  In fiery gloom to dwell eternally;
Nor shall your father nor your mother loose
  The bars of that black dungeon—utterly
You shall be cast out from the light of day,
To rule the ghosts of men, unblest as they.»

XLIV.

To whom thus Hermes slily answer'd:—« Son
  Of great Latona, what a speech is this!
Why come you here to ask me what is done
  With the wild oxen which it seems you miss?
I have not seen them, nor from any one
  Have heard a word of the whole business;
If you should promise an immense reward,
I could not tell more than you now have heard.

XLV.

« An ox-stealer should be both tall and strong,
  And I am but a little new-born thing,
Who, yet at least, can think of nothing wrong:—
  My business is to suck, and sleep, and fling
The cradle-clothes about me all day long,—
  Or half asleep, hear my sweet mother sing,
And to be wash'd in water clean and warm,
And hush'd and kiss'd and kept secure from harm.

XLVI.

« O, let not e'er this quarrel be averr'd!
  The astounded Gods would laugh at you, if e'er
You should allege a story so absurd,
  As that a new-born infant forth could fare
Out of his home after a savage herd.
  I was born yesterday—my small feet are
Too tender for the roads so hard and rough:—
And if you think that this is not enough,

XLVII.

« I swear a great oath, by my father's head,
  That I stole not your cows, and that I know
Of no one else, who might, or could, or did.—
  Whatever things cows are, I do not know,
For I have only heard the name.»—This said,
  He wink'd as fast as could be, and his brow
Was wrinkled, and a whistle loud gave he,
Like one who hears some strange absurdity.

XLVIII.

Apollo gently smiled and said:—« Ay, ay,—
  You cunning little rascal, you will bore
Many a rich man's house, and your array
  Of thieves will lay their siege before his door,
Silent as night, in night; and many a day
  In the wild glens rough shepherds will deplore
That you or yours, having an appetite,
Met with their cattle, comrade of the night!

XLIX.

« And this among the Gods shall be your gift,
  To be consider'd as the lord of those
Who swindle, house-break, sheep-steal, and shop-lift;—
  But now if you would not your last sleep dose,
Crawl out!»—Thus saying, Phœbus did uplift
  The subtle infant in his swaddling clothes,
And in his arms, according to his wont,
A scheme devised the illustrious Argiphont.

L.

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And sneezed and shudder'd—Phœbus on the grass
  Him threw, and whilst all that he had design'd
He did perform—eager although to pass,
  Apollo darted from his mighty mind
Towards the subtle babe the following scoff:
« Do not imagine this will get you off,

LI.

« You little swaddled child of Jove and May!»
  And seized him:—« By this omen I shall trace
My noble herds, and you shall lead the way.»—
  Cyllenian Hermes from the grassy place,
Like one in earnest haste to get away,
  Rose, and with hands lifted towards his face
Roused both his ears—up from his shoulders drew
His swaddling clothes, and—« What mean you to do

LII.

« With me, you unkind God?»—said Mercury:
  « Is it about these cows you tease me so?
I wish the race of cows were perish'd!—I
  Stole not your cows—I do not even know
What things cows are. Alas! I well may sigh,
  That since I came into this world of woe,
I should have ever heard the name of one—
But I appeal to the Saturnian's throne.»

LIII.

Thus Phœbus and the vagrant Mercury
Talk'd without coming to an explanation,
With adverse purpose. As for Phœbus, he
Sought not revenge, but only information,
And Hermes tried with lies and roguery
To cheat Apollo—But when no evasion
Served—for the cunning one his match had found—
He paced on first over the sandy ground.

LIV.

He of the Silver Bow, the child of Jove
Follow'd behind, till to their heavenly Sire
Came both his children—beautiful as Love,
And from his equal balance did require
A judgment in the cause wherein they strove.
O'er odorous Olympus and its snows
A murmuring tumult as they came arose,—

LV.

And from the folded depths of the great Hill,
While Hermes and Apollo reverent stood
Before Jove's throne, the indestructible
Immortals rush'd in mighty multitude;
And whilst their seats in order due they fill,
The lofty Thunderer in a careless mood
To Phœbus said:—« Whence drive you this sweet prey,
This herald-baby, born but yesterday?—

LVI.

« A most important subject, trifler, this
To lay before the Gods!»—« Nay, father, nay,
When you have understood the business,
Say not that I alone am fond of prey.
I found this little boy in a recess
Under Cyllene's mountains far away—
A manifest and most apparent thief,
A scandal-monger beyond all belief.

LVII.

« I never saw his like either in heaven
Or upon earth for knavery or craft:
Out of the field my cattle yester-even,
By the low shore on which the loud sea laugh'd,
He right down to the river-ford had driven;
And mere astonishment would make you daft
To see the double kind of footsteps strange
He has impress'd wherever he did range.

LVIII.

« The cattle's track on the black dust, full well
Is evident, as if they went towards
The place from which they came—that asphodel
Meadow, in which I feed my many herds.—
His steps were most incomprehensible—
I know not how I can describe in words
Those tracks—he could have gone along the sands
Neither upon his feet nor on his hands;—

LIX.

« He must have had some other stranger mode
Of moving on: those vestiges immense,
Far as I traced them on the sandy road,
Seem'd like the trail of oak-toppings:—but thence
No mark or track denoting where they trod
The hard ground gave:—but, working at his fence,
A mortal hedger saw him as he past
To Pylos, with the cows, in fiery haste.

LX.

« I found that in the dark he quietly
Had sacrificed some cows, and before light
Had thrown the ashes all dispersedly
About the road—then, still as gloomy night,
Had crept into his cradle, either eye
Rubbing, and cogitating some new sleight.
No eagle could have seen him as he lay
Hid in his cavern from the peering day.

LXI.

« I tax'd him with the fact, when he averr'd
Most solemnly that he did neither see
Or even had in any manner heard
Of my lost cows, whatever things cows be;
Nor could he tell, though offer'd a reward,
Not even who could tell of them to me.»
So speaking, Phœbus sate; and Hermes then
Address'd the Supreme Lord of Gods and Men:—

LXII.

« Great Father, you know clearly beforehand
That all which I shall say to you is sooth;
I am a most veracious person, and
Totally unacquainted with untruth.
At sunrise, Phœbus came, but with no band
Of Gods to bear him witness, in great wrath,
To my abode, seeking his heifers there,
And saying that I must show him where they are,

LXIII.

« Or he would hurl me down the dark abyss.
I know, that every Apollonian limb
Is clothed with speed and might and manliness,
As a green bank with flowers—but unlike him
I was born yesterday, and you may guess
He well knew this when he indulged the whim
Of bullying a poor little new-born thing
That slept, and never thought of cow-driving.

LXIV.

« Am I like a strong fellow who steals kine?
Believe me, dearest Father, such you are,
This driving of the herds is none of mine;
Across my threshold did I wander ne'er,
So may I thrive! I reverence the divine
Sun and the Gods, and I love you, and care
Even for this hard accuser—who must know
I am as innocent as they or you.

LXV.

« I swear by these most gloriously-wrought portals—
(It is, you will allow, an oath of might)
Through which the multitude of the Immortals
Pass and repass forever, day and night,
Devising schemes for the affairs of mortals—
That I am guiltless; and I will requite,
Although mine enemy be great and strong,
His cruel threat—do thou defend the young!»

LXVI.

So speaking, the Cyllenian Argiphont
Wink'd, as if now his adversary was fitted:—
And Jupiter, according to his wont,
Laugh'd heartily to hear the subtle-witted
Infant give such a plausible account,
And every word a lie. But he remitted
Judgment at present—and his exhortation
Was, to compose the affair by arbitration.

LXVII.

And they by mighty Jupiter were bidden
To go forth with a single purpose both,
Neither the other chiding nor yet chidden:
And Mercury with innocence and truth
To lead the way, and show where he had hidden
The mighty heifers.—Hermes, nothing loth,
Obey'd the Ægis-bearer's will—for he
Is able to persuade all easily.

LXVIII.

These lovely children of Heaven's highest Lord
Hasten'd to Pylos, and the pastures wide
And lofty stalls by the Alphean ford,
Where wealth in the mute night is multiplied
With silent growth. Whilst Hermes drove the herd
Out of the stony cavern, Phœbus spied
The hides of those the little babe had slain,
Stretch'd on the precipice above the plain.

LXIX.

« How was it possible,» then Phœbus said,
« That you, a little child, born yesterday,
A thing on mother's milk and kisses fed,
Could two prodigious heifers ever flay?
Even I myself may well hereafter dread
Your prowess, offspring of Cyllenian May,
When you grow strong and tall.»—He spoke, and bound
Stiff withy bands the infant's wrists around.

LXX.

He might as well have bound the oxen wild;
The withy bands, though starkly interknit,
Fell at the feet of the immortal child,
Loosen'd by some device of his quick wit.
Phœbus perceived himself again beguiled,
And stared—while Hermes sought some hole or pit,
Looking askance and winking fast as thought,
Where he might hide himself and not be caught.

LXXI.

Sudden he changed his plan, and with strange skill
Subdued the strong Latonian, by the might
Of winning music, to his mightier will;
His left hand held the lyre, and in his right
The plectrum struck the chords—unconquerable
Up from beneath his hand in circling flight
The gathering music rose—and sweet as Love
The penetrating notes did live and move

LXXII.

Within the heart of great Apollo—he
Listen'd with all his soul, and laugh'd for pleasure.
Close to his side stood harping fearlessly
The unabashed boy; and to the measure
Of the sweet lyre, there follow'd loud and free
His joyous voice; for he unlock'd the treasure
Of his deep song, illustrating the birth
Of the bright Gods and the dark desert Earth:

LXXIII.

And how to the Immortals every one
A portion was assign'd of all that is;
But chief Mnemosyne did Maia's son
Clothe in the light of his loud melodies;—
And as each God was born or had begun,
He in their order due and fit degrees
Sung of his birth and being—and did move
Apollo to unutterable love.

LXXIV.

These words were winged with his swift delight:
« You heifer-stealing schemer, well do you
Deserve that fifty oxen should requite
Such minstrelsies as I have heard even now.
Comrade of feasts, little contriving wight,
One of your secrets I would gladly know,
Whether the glorious power you now show forth
Was folded up within you at your birth,

LXXV.

« Or whether mortal taught or God inspired
The power of unpremeditated song?
Many divinest sounds have I admired,
The Olympian Gods and mortal men among;
But such a strain of wondrous, strange, untired,
And soul-awakening music, sweet and strong,
Yet did I never hear except from thee,
Offspring of May, impostor Mercury!

LXXVI.

« What Muse, what skill, what unimagined use,
What exercise of subtlest art, has given
Thy songs such power?—for those who hear may chuse
From thee the choicest of the gifts of Heaven,
Delight, and love, and sleep,—sweet sleep, whose dews
Are sweeter than the balmy tears of even:—
And I, who speak this praise, am that Apollo
Whom the Olympian Muses ever follow:

LXXVII.

« And their delight is dance, and the blithe noise
Of song and overflowing poesy;
And sweet, even as desire, the liquid voice
Of pipes, that fills the clear air thrillingly;
But never did my inmost soul rejoice
In this dear work of youthful revelry,
As now I wonder at thee, son of Jove;
Thy harpings and thy song are soft as love.

LXXVIII.

« Now since thou hast, although so very small,
Science of arts so glorious, thus I swear,
And let this cornel javelin, keen and tall,
Witness between us what I promise here,—
That I will lead thee to the Olympian Hall,
Honour'd and mighty, with thy mother dear;
And many glorious gifts in joy will give thee,
And even at the end will ne'er deceive thee.»

LXXIX.

To whom thus Mercury with prudent speech:—
« Wisely hast thou inquired of my skill:
I envy thee no thing I know to teach
Even this day:—for both in word and will
I would be gentle with thee; thou canst reach
All things in thy wise spirit, and thy sill
Is highest in heaven among the sons of Jove,
Who loves thee in the fulness of his love.

LXXX.

« The Counsellor Supreme has given to thee
Divinest gifts, out of the amplitude
Of his profuse exhaustless treasury;
By thee, 't is said, the depths are understood
Of his far voice; by thee the mystery
Of all oracular fates,—and the dread mood
Of the diviner is breathed up, even I—
A child—perceive thy might and majesty—

LXXXI.

« Thou canst seek out and compass all that wit
Can find or teach;—yet since thou wilt, come take
The lyre—be mine the glory giving it—
Strike the sweet chords, and sing aloud, and wake
Thy joyous pleasure out of many a fit
Of tranced sound—and with fleet fingers make
Thy liquid-voiced comrade talk with thee:
It can talk measured music eloquently.

LXXXII.

« Then bear it boldly to the revel loud,
Love-wakening dance, or feast of solemn state,
A joy by night or day—for those endowed
With art and wisdom, who interrogate,
It teaches, babbling in delightful mood
All things which make the spirit most elate,
Soothing the mind with sweet familiar play,
Chasing the heavy shadows of dismay.

LXXXIII.

« To those who are unskill'd in its sweet tongue,
Though they should question most impetuously
Its hidden soul, it gossips something wrong—
Some senseless and impertinent reply.
But thou, who art as wise as thou art strong,
Can compass all that thou desirest. I
Present thee with this music-flowing shell,
Knowing thou canst interrogate it well.

LXXXIV.

« And let us two henceforth together feed
On this green mountain slope and pastoral plain,
The herds in litigation—they will breed
Quickly enough to recompense our pain,
If to the bulls and cows we take good heed;—
And thou, though somewhat over fond of gain,
Grudge me not half the profit.»—Having spoke,
The shell he proffer'd, and Apollo took;

LXXXV.

And gave him in return the glittering lash,
Installing him as herdsman;—from the look
Of Mercury then laugh'd a joyous flash.
And then Apollo with the plectrum strook
The chords, and from beneath his hands a crash
Of mighty sounds rush'd up, whose music shook
The soul with sweetness; as of an adept
His sweeter voice a just accordance kept.

LXXXVI.

The herd went wandering o'er the divine mead,
Whilst these most beautiful Sons of Jupiter
Won their swift way up to the snowy head
Of white Olympus, with the joyous lyre
Soothing their journey; and their father dread
Gather'd them both into familiar
Affection sweet,—and then, and now, and ever,
Hermes must love Him of the Golden Quiver,

LXXXVII.

To whom he gave the lyre that sweetly sounded,
Which skilfully he held and played thereon.
He piped the while, and far and wide rebounded
The echo of his pipings; every one
Of the Olympians sat with joy astounded,
While he conceived another piece of fun,
One of his old tricks—which the God of Day
Perceiving, said:—« I fear thee, Son of May;—

LXXXVIII.

« I fear thee and thy sly cameleon spirit,
Lest thou should steal my lyre and crooked bow;
This glory and power thou dost from Jove inherit,
To teach all craft upon the earth below;
Thieves love and worship thee—it is thy merit
To make all mortal business ebb and flow
By roguery:—now, Hermes, if you dare,
By sacred Styx a mighty oath to swear

LXXXIX.

« That you will never rob me, you will do
A thing extremely pleasing to my heart.»
Then Mercury sware by the Stygian dew,
That he would never steal his bow or dart,
Or lay his hands on what to him was due,
Or ever would employ his powerful art
Against his Pythian fane. Then Phœbus swore
There was no God or man whom he loved more.

XC.

« And I will give thee as a good-will token,
The beautiful wand of wealth and happiness;
A perfect three-leaved rod of gold unbroken,
Whose magic will thy footsteps ever bless;
And whatsoever by Jove's voice is spoken
Of earthly or divine from its recess,
It, like a loving soul, to thee will speak,
And more than this do thou forbear to seek.

XCI.

« For, dearest child, the divinations high
Which thou requirest, 't is unlawful ever
That thou, or any other deity
Should understand—and vain were the endeavour;
For they are hidden in Jove's mind, and I
In trust of them, have sworn that I would never
Betray the counsels of Jove's inmost will
To any God—the oath was terrible.

XCII.

« Then, golden-wanded brother, ask me not
To speak the fates by Jupiter design'd;
But be it mine to tell their various lot
To the unnumber'd tribes of human kind.
Let good to these, and ill to those be wrought
As I dispense—but he who comes consign'd
By voice and wings of perfect augury
To my great shrine, shall find avail in me.

XCIII.

« Him will I not deceive, but will assist;
But he who comes relying on such birds
As chatter vainly, who would strain and twist
The purpose of the Gods with idle words,
And deems their knowledge light, he shall have mist
His road—whilst I among my other hoards
His gifts deposit. Yet, O son of May!
I have another wondrous thing to say:

XCIV.

« There are three Fates, three virgin Sisters, who
Rejoicing in their wind-outspeeding wings,
Their heads with flour snowed over white and new,
Sit in a vale round which Parnassus flings
Its circling skirts—from these I have learn'd true
Vaticinations of remotest things.
My father cared not. Whilst they search out dooms,
They sit apart and feed on honeycombs.

XCV.

« They, having eaten the fresh honey, grow
Drunk with divine enthusiasm, and utter
With earnest willingness the truth they know;
But if deprived of that sweet food, they mutter
All plausible delusions;—these to you
I give;—if you inquire, they will not stutter;
Delight your own soul with them:—any man
You would instruct, may profit, if he can.

XCVI.

« Take these and the fierce oxen, Maia's child—
O'er many a horse and toil-enduring mule,
O'er jagg'd-jaw'd lions, and the wild
White-tusked boars, o'er all, by field or pool,
Of cattle which the mighty Mother mild
Nourishes in her bosom, thou shalt rule—
Thou dost alone the veil of death uplift—
Thou givest not—yet this is a great gift.»

XCVII.

Thus king Apollo loved the child of May
In truth, and Jove cover'd them with love and joy.
Hermes with Gods and men even from that day
Mingled, and wrought the latter much annoy,
And little profit, going far astray
Through the dun night. Farewell, delightful Boy,
Of Jove and Maia sprung,—never by me,
Nor thou, nor other songs shall unremember'd be.

THE CYCLOPS;

A SATYRIC DRAMA.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GREEK OF EURIPIDES.

SILENUS.
CHORUS OF SATYRS.
ULYSSES.
THE CYCLOPS.

SILENUS.

O, BACCHUS, what a world of toil, both now
And ere these limbs were overworn with age,
Have I endured for thee! First, when thou fled'st
The mountain-nymphs who nurst thee, driven afar
By the strange madness Juno sent upon thee;
Then in the battle of the sons of Earth,
When I stood foot by foot close to thy side,
No unpropitious fellow-combatant,
And driving through his shield my winged spear,
Slew vast Enceladus. Consider now,
Is it a dream of which I speak to thee?
By Jove it is not, for you have the trophies!
And now I suffer more than all before.
For when I heard that Juno had devised
A tedious voyage for you, I put to sea
With all my children quaint in search of you;
And I myself stood on the beaked prow
And fix'd the naked mast, and all my boys
Leaning upon their oars, with splash and strain
Made white with foam the green and purple sea,—
And so we sought you, king. We were sailing,
Near Malea, when an eastern wind arose,
And drove us to this wild Ætnean rock;
The one-eyed children of the Ocean God,
The man-destroying Cyclopses inhabit,
On this wild shore, their solitary caves,
And one of these, named Polypheme, has caught us
To be his slaves; and so, for all delight
Of Bacchic sports, sweet dance and melody,
We keep this lawless giant's wandering flocks.
My sons indeed, on far declivities,
Young things themselves, tend on the youngling sheep,
But I remain to fill the water-casks,
Or sweeping the hard floor, or ministering
Some impious and abominable meal
To the fell Cyclops. I am wearied of it!
And now I must scrape up the litter'd floor
With this great iron rake, so to receive
My absent master and his evening sheep
In a cave neat and clean. Even now I see
My children tending the flocks hitherward.
Ha! what is this? are your Sicinnian measures
Even now the same, as when with dance and song
You brought young Bacchus to Athæa's halls?

* * * * *

CHORUS OF SATYRS.

STROPHE.

Where has he of race divine
Wander'd in the winding rocks?
Here the air is calm and fine
For the father of the flocks;—
Here the grass is soft and sweet,
And the river-eddies meet
In the trough beside the cave,
Bright as in their fountain wave.
Neither here, nor on the dew
Of the lawny uplands feeding?
Oh, you come!—a stone at you
Will I throw to mend your breeding;
Get along, you horned thing,
Wild, seditious, rambling!

EPODE.[1]

An Iacchic melody
To the golden Aphrodite
Will I lift, as erst did I
Seeking her and her delight
With the Mænads, whose white feet
To the music glance and fleet.
Bacchus, O beloved! where,
Shaking wide thy yellow hair,
Wanderest thou alone, afar?
To the one-eyed Cyclops, we,
Who by right thy servants are,
Minister in misery,
In these wretched goat-skins clad,
Far from thy delights and thee.

SILENUS.

Be silent, sons; command the slaves to drive
The gather'd flocks into the rock-roof'd cave.

CHORUS.

Go!—But what needs this serious haste, O father?

SILENUS.

I see a Greek ship's boat upon the coast,
And thence the rowers with some general
Approaching to this cave. About their necks
Hang empty vessels, as they wanted food,
And water-flasks.—O, miserable strangers!

[1] The Antistrophe is omitted.

Whence come they, that they know not what and who
My master is, approaching in ill hour
The inhospitable roof of Polypheme,
And the Cyclopian jaw-bone, man-destroying?
Be silent, Satyrs, while I ask and hear
Whence coming, they arrive at the Ætnean hill.

ULYSSES.

Friends, can you show me some clear water spring,
The remedy of our thirst? Will any one
Furnish with food seamen in want of it?
Ha! what is this?—We seem to be arrived
At the blithe court of Bacchus. I observe
This sportive band of Satyrs near the caves.
First let me greet the elder.—Hail!

SILENUS.

Hail thou,
O Stranger! tell thy country and thy race.

ULYSSES.

The Ithacan Ulysses and the king
Of Cephalonia.

SILENUS.

Oh! I know the man,
Wordy and shrewd, the son of Sisyphus.

ULYSSES.

I am the same, but do not rail upon me.—

SILENUS.

Whence sailing do you come to Sicily?

ULYSSES.

From Ilion, and from the Trojan toils.

SILENUS.

How, touch'd you not at your paternal shore?

ULYSSES.

The strength of tempests bore me here by force.

SILENUS.

The self-same accident occurr'd to me.

ULYSSES.

Were you then driven here by stress of weather?

SILENUS.

Following the Pirates who had kidnapp'd Bacchus.

ULYSSES.

What land is this, and who inhabit it?—

SILENUS.

Ætna, the loftiest peak in Sicily.

ULYSSES.

And are there walls, and tower-surrounded towns?

SILENUS.

There are not: these lone rocks are bare of men.

ULYSSES.

And who possess the land? the race of beasts?

SILENUS.

Cyclops, who live in caverns, not in houses.

ULYSSES.

Obeying whom? Or is the state popular?

SILENUS.

Shepherds: no one obeys any in aught.

ULYSSES.

How live they? do they sow the corn of Ceres?

SILENUS.

On milk and cheese, and on the flesh of sheep.

ULYSSES.

Have they the Bromian drink from the vine's stream?

SILENUS.

Ah no! they live in an ungracious land.

ULYSSES.

And are they just to strangers?—hospitable?

SILENUS.

They think the sweetest thing a stranger brings
Is his own flesh.

ULYSSES.

What! do they eat man's flesh?

SILENUS.

No one comes here who is not eaten up.

ULYSSES.

The Cyclops now—Where is he? Not at home?

SILENUS.

Absent on Ætna, hunting with his dogs.

ULYSSES.

Know'st thou what thou must do to aid us hence?

SILENUS.

I know not: we will help you all we can.

ULYSSES.

Provide us food, of which we are in want.

SILENUS.

Here is not anything, as I said, but meat.

ULYSSES.

But meat is a sweet remedy for hunger.

SILENUS.

Cow's milk there is, and store of curdled cheese.

ULYSSES.

Bring out:—I would see all before I bargain.

SILENUS.

But how much gold will you engage to give?

ULYSSES.

I bring no gold, but Bacchic juice.

SILENUS.

O joy!
'T is long since these dry lips were wet with wine.

ULYSSES.

Maron, the son of the God, gave it me.

SILENUS.

Whom I have nursed a baby in my arms.

ULYSSES.

The son of Bacchus, for your clearer knowledge.

SILENUS.

Have you it now?—or is it in the ship?

ULYSSES.

Old man, this skin contains it, which you see.

SILENUS.

Why this would hardly be a mouthful for me.

ULYSSES.

Nay, twice as much as you can draw from thence.

SILENUS.

You speak of a fair fountain, sweet to me.

ULYSSES.

Would you first taste of the unmingled wine?

SILENUS.

'T is just—tasting invites the purchaser.

ULYSSES.

Here is the cup, together with the skin.

SILENUS.

Pour—that the draught may fillip my remembrance.

ULYSSES.

See!

SILENUS.

Papaiapæx! what a sweet smell it has!

ULYSSES.

You see it then?—

SILENUS.

By Jove, no! but I smell it.

ULYSSES.

Taste, that you may not praise it in words only.

SILENUS.

Babai! Great Bacchus calls me forth to dance!
Joy! joy!

ULYSSES.

Did it flow sweetly down your throat?

SILENUS.

So that it tingled to my very nails.

ULYSSES.

And in addition I will give you gold.

SILENUS.

Let gold alone! only unlock the cask.

ULYSSES.

Bring out some cheeses now, or a young goat.

SILENUS.

That will I do, despising any master.
Yes, let me drink one cup, and I will give
All that the Cyclops feed upon their mountains.
* * * * * * *

CHORUS.

Ye have taken Troy and laid your hands on Helen?

ULYSSES.

And utterly destroy'd the race of Priam.

SILENUS.

* * * * * * *
The wanton wretch! she was bewitch'd to see
The many-colour'd anklets and the chain
Of woven gold which girt the neck of Paris,
And so she left that good man Menelaus.
There should be no more women in the world
But such as are reserved for me alone.—
See, here are sheep, and here are goats, Ulysses,
Here are unsparing cheeses of press'd milk;
Take them; depart with what good speed ye may;
First leaving my reward, the Bacchic dew
Of joy-inspiring grapes.

ULYSSES.

Ah me! Alas!
What shall we do? the Cyclops is at hand!
Old man, we perish! whither can we fly?

SILENUS.

Hide yourselves quick within that hollow rock.

ULYSSES.

'T were perilous to fly into the net.

SILENUS.

The cavern has recesses numberless;
Hide yourselves quick.

ULYSSES.

That will I never do!
The mighty Troy would be indeed disgraced
If I should fly one man. How many times
Have I withstood, with shield immoveable,
Ten thousand Phrygians!—if I needs must die,
Yet will I die with glory;—if I live,
The praise which I have gain'd will yet remain.

SILENUS.

What, ho! assistance, comrades, haste assistance!

The CYCLOPS, SILENUS, ULYSSES; CHORUS.

CYCLOPS.

What is this tumult? Bacchus is not here,
Nor tympanies nor brazen castanets.
How are my young lambs in the cavern? Milking
Their dams or playing by their sides? And is
The new cheese press'd into the bull-rush baskets?
Speak! I 'll beat some of you till you rain tears—
Look up, not downwards when I speak to you.

SILENUS.

See! I now gape at Jupiter himself,
I stare upon Orion and the stars.

CYCLOPS.

Well, is the dinner fitly cook'd and laid?

SILENUS.

All ready, if your throat is ready too.

CYCLOPS.

Are the bowls full of milk besides?

SILENUS.

O'erbrimming;
So you may drink a tunful if you will.

CYCLOPS.

Is it ewe's milk or cow's milk, or both mix'd?—

SILENUS.

Both, either; only pray don't swallow me.

CYCLOPS.

By no means.——
* * *
What is this crowd I see beside the stalls?
Outlaws or thieves? for near my cavern-home,
I see my young lambs coupled two by two
With willow bands; mixed with my cheeses lie
Their implements; and this old fellow here
Has his bald head broken with stripes.

SILENUS.

Ah me!
I have been beaten till I burn with fever.

CYCLOPS.

By whom? Who laid his fist upon your head?

SILENUS.

Those men, because I would not suffer them
To steal your goods.

CYCLOPS.

Did not the rascals know
I am a God, sprung from the race of heaven?

SILENUS.

I told them so, but they bore off your things,
And ate the cheese in spite of all I said,
And carried out the lambs—and said, moreover,
They'd pin you down with a three-cubit collar,
And pull your vitals out through your one eye,
Torture your back with stripes, then binding you,
Throw you as ballast into the ship's hold,
And then deliver you, a slave, to move
Enormous rocks, or found a vestibule.

CYCLOPS.

In truth? Nay, haste, and place in order quickly
The cooking-knives, and heap upon the hearth,
And kindle it, a great faggot of wood—
As soon as they are slaughter'd, they shall fill
My belly, broiling warm from the live coals,
Or boiled and seethed within the bubbling cauldron.
I am quite sick of the wild mountain game;
Of stags and lions I have gorged enough,
And I grow hungry for the flesh of men.

SILENUS.

Nay, master, something new is very pleasant
After one thing for ever, and of late
Very few strangers have approach'd our cave.

ULYSSES.

Hear, Cyclops, a plain tale on the other side.
We, wanting to buy food, came from our ship
Into the neighbourhood of your cave, and here
This old Silenus gave us in exchange
These lambs for wine, the which he took and drank,

And all by mutual compact, without force.
There is no word of truth in what he says,
For slily he was selling all your store.

SILENUS.

I? May you perish, wretch—

ULYSSES.

If I speak false!

SILENUS.

Cyclops, I swear by Neptune who begot thee,
By mighty Triton and by Nereus old,
Calypso and the glaucous ocean Nymphs,
The sacred waves and all the race of fishes—
Be these the witnesses, my dear sweet master,
My darling little Cyclops, that I never
Gave any of your stores to these false strangers;—
If I speak false may those whom most I love,
My children, perish wretchedly!

CHORUS.

There stop!
I saw him giving these things to the strangers.
If I speak false, then may my father perish,
But do not thou wrong hospitality.

CYCLOPS.

You lie! I swear that he is juster far
Than Rhadamanthus—I trust more in him.
But let me ask, whence have ye sail'd, O strangers?
Who are you? And what city nourish'd ye?

ULYSSES.

Our race is Ithacan—having destroy'd
The town of Troy, the tempests of the sea
Have driven us on thy land, O Polypheme.

CYCLOPS.

What, have ye shared in the unenvied spoil
Of the false Helen, near Scamander's stream?

ULYSSES.

The same, having endured a woful toil.

CYCLOPS.

O, basest expedition! sail'd ye not
From Greece to Phrygia for one woman's sake?

ULYSSES.

'T was the Gods' work—no mortal was in fault.
But, O great offspring of the ocean-king,
We pray thee and admonish thee with freedom,
That thou dost spare thy friends who visit thee,
And place no impious food within thy jaws.
For in the depths of Greece we have uprear'd
Temples to thy great father, which are all
His homes. The sacred bay of Tænarus
Remains inviolate, and each dim recess
Scoop'd high on the Malean promontory,
And aery Sunium's silver-veined crag,
Which divine Pallas keeps unprofaned ever,
The Gerastian asylums, and whate'er
Within wide Greece our enterprise has kept
From Phrygian contumely; and in which
You have a common care, for you inhabit
The skirts of Grecian land, under the roots
Of Ætna and its crags, spotted with fire.
Turn then to converse under human laws,
Receive us shipwreck'd suppliants, and provide
Food, clothes, and fire, and hospitable gifts;
Nor fixing upon oxen-piercing spits
Our limbs, so fill your belly and your jaws.
Priam's wide land has widow'd Greece enough;
And weapon-winged murder heap'd together
Enough of dead, and wives are husbandless,
And ancient women and grey fathers wail
Their childless age;—if you should roast the rest,
And 't is a bitter feast that you prepare,
Where then would any turn? Yet be persuaded;
Forego the lust of your jaw-bone; prefer
Pious humanity to wicked will:
Many have bought too dear their evil joys.

SILENUS.

Let me advise you, do not spare a morsel
Of all his flesh. If you should eat his tongue
You would become most eloquent, O Cyclops!

CYCLOPS.

Wealth, my good fellow, is the wise man's God,
All other things are a pretence and boast.
What are my father's ocean promontories,
The sacred rocks whereon he dwells, to me?
Stranger, I laugh to scorn Jove's thunderbolt,
I know not that his strength is more than mine.
As to the rest I care not:—When he pours
Rain from above, I have a close pavilion
Under this rock, in which I lie supine,
Feasting on a roast calf or some wild beast,
And drinking pans of milk; and gloriously
Emulating the thunder of high heaven.
And when the Thracian wind pours down the snow,
I wrap my body in the skins of beasts,
Kindle a fire, and bid the snow whirl on.
The earth, by force, whether it will or no,
Bringing forth grass, fattens my flocks and herds,
Which, to what other God but to myself
And this great belly, first of deities,
Should I be bound to sacrifice? I well know
The wise man's only Jupiter is this,
To eat and drink during his little day,
And give himself no care. And as for those
Who complicate with laws the life of man,
I freely give them tears for their reward.
I will not cheat my soul of its delight,
Or hesitate in dining upon you:—
And that I may be quit of all demands,
These are my hospitable gifts;—fierce fire
And yon ancestral cauldron, which o'erbubbling,
Shall finely cook your miserable flesh.
Creep in!—

* * * * * *

ULYSSES.

Ay! ay! I have escaped the Trojan toils,
I have escaped the sea, and now I fall
Under the cruel grasp of one impious man.
O Pallas, mistress, Goddess, sprung from Jove,
Now, now, assist me! Mightier toils than Troy
Are these.—I totter on the chasms of peril;—
And thou who inhabitest the thrones
Of the bright stars, look, hospitable Jove,
Upon this outrage of thy deity,
Otherwise be consider'd as no God!

CHORUS (*alone*).

For your gaping gulf, and your gullet wide,
The ravine is ready on every side,
The limbs of the strangers are cook'd and done,
There is boil'd meat, and roast meat, and meat from the coal,
You may chop it, and tear it, and gnash it for fun,
A hairy goat's-skin contains the whole.
Let me but escape, and ferry me o'er
The stream of your wrath to a safer shore.

The Cyclops Ætnean is cruel and bold,
He murders the strangers
That sit on his hearth,
And dreads no avengers
To rise from the earth.
He roasts the men before they are cold,
He snatches them broiling from the coal,
And from the cauldron pulls them whole,
And minces their flesh and gnaws their bone
With his cursed teeth, till all be gone.

Farewell, foul pavilion!
Farewell, rites of dread!
The Cyclops vermilion,
With slaughter uncloying,
Now feasts on the dead,
In the flesh of strangers joying!

ULYSSES.

O Jupiter! I saw within the cave
Horrible things; deeds to be feign'd in words,
But not believed as being done.

CHORUS.

What! sawest thou the impious Polypheme
Feasting upon your loved companions now?

ULYSSES.

Selecting two, the plumpest of the crowd,
He grasp'd them in his hands.

CHORUS.

Unhappy man

* * * * * *

ULYSSES.

Soon as we came into this craggy place,
Kindling a fire, he cast on the broad hearth
The knotty limbs of an enormous oak,
Three waggon-loads at least; and then he strew'd
Upon the ground, beside the red fire-light,
His couch of pine leaves; and he milk'd the cows,
And pouring forth the white milk, fill'd a bowl
Three cubits wide and four in depth, as much
As would contain four amphoræ, and bound it
With ivy wreaths; then placed upon the fire
A brazen pot to boil, and made red-hot
The points of spits, not sharpen'd with the sickle,
But with a fruit-tree bough, and with the jaws
Of axes for Ætnean slaughterings. [1]
And when this God-abandon'd cook of hell
Had made all ready, he seized two of us
And kill'd them in a kind of measured manner;
For he flung one against the brazen rivets
Of the huge cauldron, and seized the other
By the foot's tendon, and knock'd out his brains
Upon the sharp edge of the craggy stone:
Then peel'd his flesh with a great cooking-knife,
And put him down to roast. The other's limbs
He chopp'd into the cauldron to be boil'd.
And I, with the tears raining from my eyes,
Stood near the Cyclops, ministering to him;
The rest, in the recesses of the cave,
Clung to the rock like bats, bloodless with fear.
When he was fill'd with my companions' flesh,
He threw himself upon the ground, and sent
A loathsome exhalation from his maw.
Then a divine thought came to me. I fill'd
The cup of Maron, and I offer'd him
To taste, and said:—«Child of the Ocean God,
Behold what drink the vines of Greece produce,
The exultation and the joy of Bacchus.»
He, satiated with his unnatural food,
Received it, and at one draught drank it off,
And taking my hand, praised me: «Thou hast given
A sweet draught after a sweet meal, dear guest.»
And I, perceiving that it pleased him, filled
Another cup, well knowing that the wine
Would wound him soon, and take a sure revenge.
And the charm fascinated him, and I
Plied him cup after cup, until the drink
Had warmed his entrails, and he sang aloud
In concert with my wailing fellow-seamen
A hideous discord—and the cavern rung.
I have stolen out, so that if you will
You may achieve my safety and your own.
But say, do you desire, or not, to fly
This uncompanionable man, and dwell,
As was your wont, among the Grecian nymphs
Within the fanes of your beloved God?
Your father there within agrees to it;
But he is weak and overcome with wine;
And caught as if with bird-lime by the cup,
He claps his wings and crows in doting joy.
You who are young, escape with me, and find
Bacchus your ancient friend; unsuited he
To this rude Cyclops.

CHORUS.

Oh my dearest friend,
That I could see that day, and leave for ever
The impious Cyclops!

* * * * * *

ULYSSES.

Listen then what a punishment I have
For this fell monster, how secure a flight
From your hard servitude.

CHORUS.

Oh sweeter far
Than is the music of an Asian lyre
Would be the news of Polypheme destroy'd.

ULYSSES.

Delighted with the Bacchic drink he goes
To call his brother Cyclops—who inhabit
A village upon Ætna not far off.

CHORUS.

I understand, catching him when alone
You think by some measure to dispatch him,
Or thrust him from the precipice.

ULYSSES.

O no!
Nothing of that kind; my device is subtle.

CHORUS.

How then? I heard of old that thou wert wise.

ULYSSES.

I will dissuade him from this plan, by saying
It were unwise to give the Cyclopses
This precious drink, which if enjoyed alone
Would make life sweeter for a longer time.
When vanquish'd by the Bacchic power, he sleeps;
There is a trunk of olive wood within,
Whose point, having made sharp with this good sword,
I will conceal in fire, and when I see
It is alight, will fix it, burning yet,
Within the socket of the Cyclops' eye,
And melt it out with fire: as when a man

[1] I confess I do not understand this.—*Note of the Author.*

Turns by its handle a great auger round,
Fitting the frame-work of a ship with beams,
So will I, in the Cyclops' fiery eye,
Turn round the brand and dry the pupil up.

CHORUS.

Joy! I am mad with joy at your device.

ULYSSES.

And then with you, my friends, and the old man,
We 'll load the hollow depth of our black ship,
And row with double strokes from this dread shore.

CHORUS.

May I, as in libations to a God,
Share in the blinding him with the red brand!
I would have some communion in his death.

ULYSSES.

Doubtless: the brand is a great brand to hold.

CHORUS.

Oh! I would lift an hundred waggon-loads,
If like a wasp's nest I could scoop the eye out
Of the detested Cyclops.

ULYSSES.

Silence now!
Ye know the close device—and when I call,
Look ye obey the masters of the craft.
I will not save myself and leave behind
My comrades in the cave: I might escape,
Having got clear from that obscure recess,
But 't were unjust to leave in jeopardy
The dear companions who sail'd here with me.

CHORUS.

Come! who is first, that with his hand
Will urge down the burning brand
Through the lids, and quench and pierce
The Cyclops' eye so fiery fierce?

SEMI-CHORUS I.

Song within.

Listen! listen! he is coming,
A most hideous discord humming,
Drunken, museless, awkward, yelling,
Far along his rocky dwelling;
Let us with some comic spell
Teach the yet unteachable.
By all means he must be blinded,
If my council be but minded.

SEMI-CHORUS II.

Happy those made odorous
With the dew which sweet grapes weep!
To the village hastening thus,
Seek the vines that soothe to sleep,
Having first embraced thy friend,
There in luxury without end,
With the strings of yellow hair,
Of thy voluptuous leman fair,
Shalt sit playing on a bed!—
Speak what door is opened?

CYCLOPS.

Ha! ha! ha! I 'm full of wine,
Heavy with the joy divine,
With the young feast oversated,
Like a merchant's vessel freighted
To the water's edge, my crop
Is laden to the gullet's top.
The fresh meadow-grass of spring
Tempts me forth thus wandering
To my brothers on the mountains,
Who shall share the wine's sweet fountains.
Bring the cask, O stranger, bring!

CHORUS.

One with eyes the fairest
Cometh from his dwelling;
Some one loves thee, rarest,
Bright beyond my telling.
In thy grace thou shinest
Like some nymph divinest,
In her caverns dewy:—
All delights pursue thee,
Soon pied flowers, sweet-breathing,
Shall thy head be wreathing.

ULYSSES.

Listen, O Cyclops, for I am well skill'd
In Bacchus, whom I gave thee of to drink.

CYCLOPS.

What sort of God is Bacchus then accounted?

ULYSSES.

The greatest among men for joy of life.

CYCLOPS.

I gulp'd him down with very great delight.

ULYSSES.

This is a God who never injures men.

CYCLOPS.

How does the God like living in a skin?

ULYSSES.

He is content wherever he is put.

CYCLOPS.

Gods should not have their body in a skin.

ULYSSES.

If he gives joy, what is his skin to you?

CYCLOPS.

I hate the skin, but love the wine within.

ULYSSES.

Stay here; now drink, and make your spirit glad.

CYCLOPS.

Should I not share this liquor with my brothers?

ULYSSES.

Keep it yourself, and be more honour'd so.

CYCLOPS.

I were more useful, giving to my friends.

ULYSSES.

But village mirth breeds contests, broils, and blows.

CYCLOPS.

When I am drunk none shall lay hands on me.—

ULYSSES.

A drunken man is better within doors.

CYCLOPS.

He is a fool who, drinking, loves not mirth.

ULYSSES.

But he is wise who, drunk, remains at home.

CYCLOPS.

Whall shall I do, Silenus? Shall I stay?

SILENUS.

Stay—for what need have you of pot-companions?

CYCLOPS.

Indeed this place is closely-carpeted
With flowers and grass.

SILENUS.

And in the sun-warm noon

'T is sweet to drink. Lie down beside me now,
Placing your mighty sides upon the ground.

CYCLOPS.

What do you put the cup behind me for?

SILENUS.

That no one here may touch it.

CYCLOPS.

Thievish one!
You want to drink;—here, place it in the midst.
And thou, O stranger, tell, how art thou called?

ULYSSES.

My name is Nobody. What favour now
Shall I receive to praise you at your hands?

CYCLOPS.

I 'll feast on you the last of your companions.

ULYSSES.

You grant your guest a fair reward, O Cyclops!

CYCLOPS.

Ha! what is this? Stealing the wine, you rogue!

SILENUS.

It was this stranger kissing me because
I look'd so beautiful.

CYCLOPS.

You shall repent
For kissing the coy wine that loves you not.

SILENUS.

By Jupiter! you said that I am fair.

CYCLOPS.

Pour out, and only give me the cup full.

SILENUS.

How is it mixed? let me observe.

CYCLOPS.

Curse you!
Give it me so.

SILENUS.

Not till I see you wear
That coronal, and taste the cup to you.

CYCLOPS.

Thou wily traitor!

SILENUS.

But the wine is sweet.
Ay, you will roar if you are caught in drinking.

CYCLOPS.

See now, my lip is clean and all my beard.

SILENUS.

Now put your elbow right and drink again.
As you see me drink— * * * *

CYCLOPS.

How now?

SILENUS.

Ye Gods, what a delicious gulp!

CYCLOPS.

Guest, take it;—you pour out the wine for me.

ULYSSES.

The wine is well accustom'd to my hand.

CYCLOPS.

Pour out the wine!

ULYSSES.

I pour; only be silent.

CYCLOPS.

Silence is a hard task to him who drinks.

ULYSSES.

Take it and drink it off; leave not a dreg.
O, that the drinker died with his own draught!

CYCLOPS.

Papai! the vine must be a sapient plant.

ULYSSES.

If you drink much after a mighty feast,
Moistening your thirsty maw, you will sleep well;
If you leave aught, Bacchus will dry you up.

CYCLOPS.

Ho! ho! I can scarce rise. What pure delight!
The heavens and earth appear to whirl about
Confusedly. I see the throne of Jove
And the clear congregation of the Gods.
Now if the Graces tempted me to kiss,
I would not; for the loveliest of them all
I would not leave this Ganymede.

SILENUS.

Polypheme,
I am the Ganymede of Jupiter.

CYCLOPS.

By Jove you are! I bore you off from Dardanus.

ULYSSES *and the* CHORUS.

ULYSSES.

Come, boys of Bacchus, children of high race,
This man within is folded up in sleep,
And soon will vomit flesh from his fell maw;
The brand under the shed thrusts out its smoke,
No preparation needs, but to burn out
The monster's eye;—but bear yourselves like men.

CHORUS.

We will have courage like the adamant rock.
All things are ready for you here; go in,
Before our father shall perceive the noise.

ULYSSES.

Vulcan, Ætnean king! burn out with fire
The shining eye of this thy neighbouring monster!
And thou, O Sleep, nursling of gloomy night,
Descend unmixed on this God-hated beast,
And suffer not Ulysses and his comrades,
Returning from their famous Trojan toils,
To perish by this man, who cares not either
For God or mortal; or I needs must think
That Chance is a supreme divinity,
And things divine are subject to her power.

CHORUS.

Soon a crab the throat will seize
Of him who feeds upon his guest;
Fire will burn his lamp-like eyes
In revenge of such a feast!
A great oak stump now is lying
In the ashes yet undying.
Come, Maron, come!
Raging let him fix the doom,
Let him tear the eyelid up
Of the Cyclops—that his cup
May be evil!
O, I long to dance and revel
With sweet Bromian, long-desired,
In loved ivy-wreaths attired;
Leaving this abandon'd home—
Will the moment ever come?

ULYSSES.

Be silent, ye wild things! Nay, hold your peace,
And keep your lips quite close; dare not to breathe,
Or spit, or e'en wink, lest ye wake the monster,
Until his eye be tortured out with fire.

CHORUS.

Nay, we are silent, and we chew the air.

ULYSSES.

Come now, and lend a hand to the great stake
Within—it is delightfully red-hot.

CHORUS.

You then command who first should seize the stake
To burn the Cyclops' eye, that all may share
In the great enterprise.

SEMI-CHORUS I.

We are too few,
We cannot at this distance from the door
Thrust fire into his eye.

SEMI-CHORUS II.

And we just now
Have become lame; cannot move hand or foot.

CHORUS.

The same thing has occurr'd to us,—our ancles
Are sprain'd with standing here, I know not how.

ULYSSES.

What, sprained with standing still?

CHORUS.

And there is dust
Or ashes in our eyes, I know not whence.

ULYSSES.

Cowardly dogs! ye will not aid me then?

CHORUS.

With pitying my own back and my back bone,
And with not wishing all my teeth knock'd out,
This cowardice comes of itself—but stay,
I know a famous Orphic incantation
To make the brand stick of its own accord
Into the skull of this one-eyed son of Earth.

ULYSSES.

Of old I knew ye thus by nature; now
I know ye better.—I will use the aid
Of my own comrades—yet, though weak of hand,
Speak cheerfully, that so ye may awaken
The courage of my friends with your blithe words.

CHORUS.

This I will do with peril of my life,
And blind you with my exhortations, Cyclops.
Hasten and thrust,
And parch up to dust
The eye of the beast
Who feeds on his guest.
Burn and blind
The Ætnean hind!
Scoop and draw,
But beware lest he claw
Your limbs near his maw.

CYCLOPS.

Ah me! my eye-sight is parched up to cinders.

CHORUS.

What a sweet pæan! sing me that again!

CYCLOPS.

Ah me! indeed, what woe has fallen upon me!
But, wretched nothings! think ye not to flee
Out of this rock; I, standing at the outlet,
Will bar the way and catch you as you pass.

CHORUS.

What are you roaring out, Cyclops?

CYCLOPS.

I perish!

CHORUS.

For you are wicked.

CYCLOPS.

And besides miserable.

CHORUS.

What! did you fall into the fire when drunk?

CYCLOPS.

'T was Nobody destroyed me.

CHORUS.

Why then no one
Can be to blame.

CYCLOPS.

I say 't was Nobody
Who blinded me.

CHORUS.

Why then you are not blind.

CYCLOPS.

I wish you were as blind as I am.

CHORUS.

Nay,
It cannot be that no one made you blind.

CYCLOPS.

You jeer me; where, I ask, is Nobody?

CHORUS.

No where, O Cyclops! * * *

CYCLOPS.

It was that stranger ruin'd me:—the wretch
First gave me wine and then burnt out my eyes,
For wine is strong and hard to struggle with.
Have they escaped, or are they yet within?

CHORUS.

They stand under the darkness of the rock,
And cling to it.

CYCLOPS.

At my right hand or left?

CHORUS.

Close on your right.

CYCLOPS.

Where?

CHORUS.

Near the rock itself
You have them.

CYCLOPS.

Oh, misfortune on misfortune!
I've crack'd my skull.

CHORUS.

Now they escape you there

CYCLOPS.

Not there, although you say so.

CHORUS.

Not on that side.

CYCLOPS.

Where then?

CHORUS.

They creep about you on your left.

CYCLOPS.

Ah! I am mock'd! They jeer me in my ills.

CHORUS.

Not there! he is a little there beyond you.

CYCLOPS.

Detested wretch! where are you?

ULYSSES.

Far from you
I keep with care this body of Ulysses.

CYCLOPS.

What do you say? You proffer a new name.

ULYSSES.

My father named me so; and I have taken

A full revenge for your unnatural feast;
I should have done ill to have burn'd down Troy,
And not revenged the murder of my comrades.

CYCLOPS.

Ai! ai! the ancient oracle is accomplish'd;
It said that I should have my eye-sight blinded
By you coming from Troy; yet it foretold
That you should pay the penalty for this
By wandering long over the homeless sea.

ULYSSES.

I bid thee weep—consider what I say,
I go towards the shore to drive my ship
To mine own land, o'er the Sicilian wave.

CYCLOPS.

Not so, if whelming you with this huge stone
I can crush you and all your men together;
I will descend upon the shore, though blind,
Groping my way adown the steep ravine.

CHORUS.

And we, the shipmates of Ulysses now,
Will serve our Bacchus all our happy lives.

SCENES

FROM THE «MAGICO PRODIGIOSO» OF CALDERON.

CYPRIAN *as a Student*; CLARIN *and* MOSCON *as poor Scholars, with books.*

CYPRIAN.

In the sweet solitude of this calm place,
This intricate wild wilderness of trees
And flowers and undergrowth of odorous plants,
Leave me; the books you brought out of the house
To me are ever best society.
And whilst with glorious festival and song
Antioch now celebrates the consecration
Of a proud temple to great Jupiter,
And bears his image in loud jubilee
To its new shrine, I would consume what still
Lives of the dying day, in studious thought,
Far from the throng and turmoil. You, my friends,
Go and enjoy the festival; it will
Be worth the labour, and return for me
When the sun seeks its grave among the billows,
Which among dim grey clouds on the horizon
Dance like white plumes upon a hearse;—and here
I shall expect you.

MOSCON.

I cannot bring my mind,
Great as my haste to see the festival
Certainly is, to leave you, Sir, without
Just saying some three or four hundred words.
How is it possible that on a day
Of such festivity, you can bring your mind
To come forth to a solitary country
With three or four old books, and turn your back
On all this mirth?

CLARIN.

My master 's in the right;
There is not any thing more tiresome
Than a procession-day, with troops of men,
And dances, and all that.

MOSCON.

From first to last,
Clarin, you are a temporizing flatterer;
You praise not what you feel, but what he does;—
Toad-eater!

CLARIN.

You lie—under a mistake—
For this is the most civil sort of lie
That can be given to a man's face. I now
Say what I think.

CYPRIAN.

Enough, you foolish fellows!
Puff'd up with your own doting ignorance,
You always take the two sides of one question.
Now go, and as I said, return for me
When night falls, veiling in its shadows wide
This glorious fabric of the universe.

MOSCON.

How happens it, although you can maintain
The folly of enjoying festivals,
That yet you go there?

CLARIN.

Nay, the consequence
Is clear:—who ever did what he advises
Others to do?—

MOSCON.

Would that my feet were wings,
So would I fly to Livia. [*Exit.*

CLARIN.

To speak truth,
Livia is she who has surprised my heart;
But he is more than half way there.—Soho!
Livia, I come; good sport, Livia, soho! [*Exit.*

CYPRIAN.

Now, since I am alone, let me examine
The question which has long disturb'd my mind
With doubt; since first I read in Plinius
The words of mystic import and deep sense
In which he defines God. My intellect
Can find no God with whom these marks and signs
Fitly agree. It is a hidden truth
Which I must fathom. [*Reads.*

Enter the DEVIL, *as a fine Gentleman.*

DÆMON.

Search even as thou wilt,
But thou shalt never find what I can hide.

CYPRIAN.

What noise is that among the boughs? Who moves!
What art thou?—

DÆMON.

'T is a foreign gentleman.
Even from this morning I have lost my way
In this wild place, and my poor horse, at last
Quite overcome, has stretch'd himself upon
The enamell'd tapestry of this mossy mountain,
And feeds and rests at the same time. I was
Upon my way to Antioch upon business
Of some importance, but wrapt up in cares
(Who is exempt from this inheritance?)
I parted from my company, and lost
My way, and lost my servants and my comrades.

CYPRIAN.

'T is singular, that even within the sight
Of the high towers of Antioch, you could lose
Your way. Of all the avenues and green paths
Of this wild wood there is not one but leads,
As to its centre, to the walls of Antioch;
Take which you will you cannot miss your road.

DÆMON.

And such is ignorance! Even in the sight
Of knowledge it can draw no profit from it.
But as it still is early, and as I
Have no acquaintances in Antioch,
Being a stranger there, I will even wait
The few surviving hours of the day,
Until the night shall conquer it. I see,
Both by your dress and by the books in which
You find delight and company, that you
Are a great student;—for my part, I feel
Much sympathy with such pursuits.

CYPRIAN.

Have you
Studied much?—

DÆMON.

No,—and yet I know enough
Not to be wholly ignorant.

CYPRIAN.

Pray, Sir,
What science may you know?—

DÆMON.

Many.

CYPRIAN.

Alas!
Much pains must we expend on one alone,
And even then attain it not;—but you
Have the presumption to assert that you
Know many without study.

DÆMON.

And with truth.
For in the country whence I come, sciences
Require no learning,—they are known.

CYPRIAN.

Oh, would
I were of that bright country! for in this,
The more we study, we the more discover
Our ignorance.

DÆMON.

It is so true, that I
Had so much arrogance as to oppose
The chair of the most high professorship,
And obtained many votes; and though I lost,
The attempt was still more glorious than the failure
Could be dishonourable: if you believe not,
Let us refer it to dispute respecting
That which you know best, and although I
Know not the opinion you maintain, and though
It be the true one, I will take the contrary.

CYPRIAN.

The offer gives me pleasure. I am now
Debating with myself upon a passage
Of Plinius, and my mind is rack'd with doubt
To understand and know who is the God
Of whom he speaks.

DÆMON.

It is a passage, if
I recollect it right, couch'd in these words:
« God is one supreme goodness, one pure essence,
One substance, and one sense, all sight, all hands.»

CYPRIAN.

'T is true.

DÆMON.

What difficulty find you here?

CYPRIAN.

I do not recognise among the Gods
The God defined by Plinius; if he must
Be supreme goodness, even Jupiter
Is not supremely good; because we see
His deeds are evil, and his attributes
Tainted with mortal weakness; in what manner
Can supreme goodness be consistent with
The passions of humanity?

DÆMON.

The wisdom
Of the old world mask'd with the names of Gods
The attributes of Nature and of Man;
A sort of popular philosophy.

CYPRIAN.

This reply will not satisfy me, for
Such awe is due to the high name of God
That ill should never be imputed. Then,
Examining the question with more care,
It follows, that the gods should always will
That which is best, were they supremely good.
How then does one will one thing—one another?
And you may not say that I allege
Poetical or philosophic learning:—
Consider the ambiguous responses
Of their oracular statues; from two shrines
Two armies shall obtain the assurance of
One victory. Is it not indisputable
That two contending wills can never lead
To the same end? And being opposite,
If one be good is not the other evil?
Evil in God is inconceivable;
But supreme goodness fails among the gods
Without their union.

DÆMON.

I deny your major.
These responses are means towards some end
Unfathom'd by our intellectual beam.
They are the work of providence, and more
The battle's loss may profit those who lose,
Than victory advantage those who win.

CYPRIAN.

That I admit, and yet that God should not
(Falsehood is incompatible with deity)
Assure the victory; it would be enough
To have permitted the defeat; if God
Be all sight,—God, who beheld the truth,
Would not have given assurance of an end
Never to be accomplish'd; thus, although
The Deity may, according to his attributes,
Be well distinguish'd into persons, yet,
Even in the minutest circumstance,
His essence must be one.

DÆMON.

To attain the end,
The affections of the actors in the scene
Must have been thus influenced by his voice.

CYPRIAN.

But for a purpose thus subordinate
He might have employed genii, good or evil,—
A sort of spirits called so by the learn'd,
Who roam about inspiring good or evil,
And from whose influence and existence we
May well infer our immortality:—
Thus God might easily, without descending
To a gross falsehood in his proper person,
Have moved the affections by this mediation
To the just point.

DÆMON.

These trifling contradictions
Do not suffice to impugn the unity
Of the high gods; in things of great importance
They still appear unanimous; consider
That glorious fabric—man,—his workmanship
Is stamp'd with one conception.

CYPRIAN.

Who made man
Must have, methinks, the advantage of the others.
If they are equal, might they not have risen
In opposition to the work, and being
All hands, according to our author here,
Have still destroyed even as the other made?
If equal in their power, and only unequal
In opportunity, which of the two
Will remain conqueror?

DÆMON.

On impossible
And false hypothesis there can be built
No argument. Say, what do you infer
From this?

CYPRIAN.

That there must be a mighty God
Of supreme goodness and of highest grace,
All sight, all hands, all truth, infallible,
Without an equal and without a rival;
The cause of all things and the effect of nothing,
One power, one will, one substance, and one essence.
And in whatever persons, one or two,
His attributes may be distinguish'd, one
Sovereign power, one solitary essence,
One cause of all cause. [*They rise.*

DÆMON.

How can I impugn
So clear a consequence?

CYPRIAN.

Do you regret
My victory?

DÆMON.

Who but regrets a check
In rivalry of wit? I could reply
And urge new difficulties, but will now
Depart, for I hear steps of men approaching,
And it is time that I should now pursue
My journey to the city.

CYPRIAN.

Go in peace!

DÆMON.

Remain in peace! Since thus it profits him
To study, I will wrap his senses up
In sweet oblivion of all thought, but of
A piece of excellent beauty; and as I
Have power given me to wage enmity
Against Justina's soul, I will extract
From one effect two vengeances. [*Exit.*

CYPRIAN.

I never
Met a more learned person. Let me now
Revolve this doubt again with careful mind. [*He reads.*

Enter LELIO *and* FLORO.

LELIO.

Here stop. These toppling rocks and tangled boughs,
Impenetrable by the noonday beam,
Shall be sole witnesses of what we——

FLORO.

Draw!
If there were words, here is the place for deeds.

LELIO.

Thou needest not instruct me; well I know
That in the field the silent tongue of steel
Speaks thus. [*They fight.*

CYPRIAN.

Ha! what is this? Lelio, Floro,
Be it enough that Cyprian stands between you,
Although unarm'd.

LELIO.

Whence comest thou, to stand
Between me and my vengeance?

FLORO.

From what rocks
And desert cells?

Enter MOSCON *and* CLARIN.

MOSCON.

Run, run! for where we left my master
We hear the clash of swords.

CLARIN.

I never
Run to approach things of this sort, but only
To avoid them. Sir! Cyprian! sir!

CYPRIAN.

Be silent, fellows! What! two friends who are
In blood and fame the eyes and hope of Antioch;
One of the noble men of the Colatti,
The other son of the Governor, adventure
And cast away, on some slight cause no doubt,
Two lives the honour of their country?

LELIO.

Cyprian!
Although my high respect towards your person
Holds now my sword suspended, thou canst not
Restore it to the slumber of its scabbard.
Thou knowest more of science than the duel;
For when two men of honour take the field,
No [ ] or respect can make them friends,
But one must die in the pursuit.

FLORO.

I pray
That you depart hence with your people, and
Leave us to finish what we have begun
Without advantage.

CYPRIAN.

Though you may imagine
That I know little of the laws of duel,
Which vanity and valour instituted,
You are in error. By my birth I am
Held no less than yourselves to know the limits
Of honour and of infamy, nor has study
Quench'd the free spirit which first order'd them;
And thus to me, as one well experienced
In the false quicksands of the sea of honour
You may refer the merits of the case;
And if I should perceive in your relation
That either has the right to satisfaction
From the other, I give you my word of honour
To leave you.

LELIO.

Under this condition then
I will relate the cause, and you will cede
And must confess th' impossibility

Of compromise; for the same lady is
Beloved by Floro and myself.

FLORO.

It seems
Much to me that the light of day should look
Upon that idol of my heart—but he——
Leave us to fight, according to thy word.

CYPRIAN.

Permit one question further: is the lady
Impossible to hope or not?

LELIO.

She is
So excellent, that if the light of day
Should excite Floro's jealousy, it were
Without just cause, for even the light of day
Trembles to gaze on her.

CYPRIAN.

Would you for your
Part marry her?

FLORO.

Such is my confidence.

CYPRIAN.

And you?

LELIO.

O would that I could lift my hope
So high! for though she is extremely poor,
Her virtue is her dowry.

CYPRIAN.

And if you both
Would marry her, is it not weak and vain,
Culpable and unworthy, thus beforehand
To slur her honour. What would the world say
If one should slay the other, and if she
Should afterwards espouse the murderer?

[*The rivals agree to refer their quarrel to* CYPRIAN; *who in consequence visits* JUSTINA, *and becomes enamoured of her: she disdains him, and he retires to a solitary sea-shore.*

SCENE II.

CYPRIAN.

Oh, memory! permit it not
That the tyrant of my thought
Be another soul that still
Holds dominion o'er the will,
That would refuse, but can no more,
To bend, to tremble, and adore.
Vain idolatry!—I saw,
And gazing, became blind with error;
Weak ambition, which the awe
Of her presence bound to terror!
So beautiful she was—and I,
Between my love and jealousy,
Am so convulsed with hope and fear,
Unworthy as it may appear;—
So bitter is the life I live,
That, hear me, Hell! I now would give
To thy most detested spirit
My soul, for ever to inherit,
To suffer punishment and pine,
So this woman may be mine.
Hear'st thou, Hell! dost thou reject it?
My soul is offer'd!

DÆMON (*unseen*).

I accept it.

[*Tempest, with thunder and lightning.*

CYPRIAN.

What is this? ye heavens for ever pure,
At once intensely radiant and obscure!
Athwart the etherial halls
The lightning's arrow and the thunder-balls
The day affright.
As from the horizon round,
Burst with earthquake sound,
In mighty torrents the electric fountains—
Clouds quench the sun, and thunder smoke
Strangles the air, and fire eclipses heaven.
Philosophy, thou canst not even
Compel their causes underneath thy yoke:
From yonder clouds even to the waves below
The fragments of a single ruin choke
Imagination's flight;
For, on flakes of surge, like feathers light,
The ashes of the desolation cast
Upon the gloomy blast,
Tell of the footsteps of the storm.
And nearer see the melancholy form
Of a great ship, the outcast of the sea,
Drives miserably!
And it must fly the pity of the port,
Or perish, and its last and sole resort
Is its own raging enemy.
The terror of the thrilling cry
Was a fatal prophecy
Of coming death, who hovers now
Upon that shatter'd prow,
That they who die not may be dying still.
And not alone the insane elements
Are populous with wild portents,
But that sad ship is as a miracle
Of sudden ruin, for it drives so fast
It seems as if it had array'd its form
With the headlong storm.
It strikes—I almost feel the shock,—
It stumbles on a jagged rock,—
Sparkles of blood on the white foam are cast.

A Tempest—All exclaim within,

We are all lost!

DÆMON (*within*).

Now from this plank will I
Pass to the land and thus fulfil my scheme.

CYPRIAN.

As in contempt of the elemental rage
A man comes forth in safety, while the ship's
Great form is in a watery eclipse
Obliterated from the Ocean's page,
And round its wreck the huge sea-monsters sit,
A horrid conclave, and the whistling wave
Are heaped over its carcase, like a grave.

The DÆMON *enters, as escaped from the sea.*

DÆMON (*aside*).

It was essential to my purposes
To wake a tumult on the sapphire ocean,
That in this unknown form I might at length
Wipe out the blot of the discomfiture
Sustain'd upon the mountain, and assail
With a new war the soul of Cyprian,

Forging the instruments of his destruction
Even from his love and from his wisdom.—Oh!
Beloved earth, dear mother, in thy bosom
I seek a refuge from the monster who
Precipitates itself upon me.

CYPRIAN.

Friend,
Collect thyself; and be the memory
Of thy late suffering, and thy greatest sorrow,
But as a shadow of the past,—for nothing
Beneath the circle of the moon, but flows
And changes, and can never know repose.

DÆMON.

And who art thou, before whose feet my fate
Has prostrated me?

CYPRIAN.

One who, moved with pity,
Would soothe its stings.

DÆMON.

Oh! that can never be!
No solace can my lasting sorrows find.

CYPRIAN.

Wherefore?

DÆMON.

Because my happiness is lost.
Yet I lament what has long ceased to be
The object of desire or memory,
And my life is not life.

CYPRIAN.

Now, since the fury
Of this earthquaking hurricane is still,
And the crystalline heaven has reassumed
Its windless calm so quickly, that it seems
As if its heavy wrath had been awaken'd
Only to overwhelm that vessel,—speak,
Who art thou, and whence comest thou?

DÆMON.

Far more
My coming hither cost, than thou hast seen
Or I can tell. Among my misadventures
This shipwreck is the least. Wilt thou hear?

CYPRIAN.

Speak.

DÆMON.

Since thou desirest, I will then unveil
Myself to thee;—for in myself I am
A world of happiness and misery;
This I have lost, and that I must lament
For ever. In my attributes I stood
So high and so heroically great,
In lineage so supreme, and with a genius
Which penetrated with a glance the world
Beneath my feet, that, won by my high merit,
A king—whom I may call the king of kings,
Because all others tremble in their pride
Before the terrors of his countenance,
In his high palace roof'd with brightest gems
Of living light—call them the stars of Heaven—
Named me his counsellor. But the high praise
Stung me with pride and envy, and I rose
In mighty competition, to ascend
His seat and place my foot triumphantly
Upon his subject thrones. Chastised, I know
The depth to which ambition falls; too mad
Was the attempt, and yet more mad were now
Repentance of the irrevocable deed:—
Therefore I chose this ruin with the glory
Of not to be subdued, before the shame
Of reconciling me with him who reigns
By coward cession.—Nor was I alone,
Nor am I now, nor shall I be alone;
And there was hope, and there may still be hope,
For many suffrages among his vassals
Hail'd me their lord and king, and many still
Are mine, and many more, perchance, shall be.
Thus vanquish'd, though in fact victorious,
I left his seat of empire, from mine eye
Shooting forth poisonous lightning, while my words
With inauspicious thunderings shook Heaven,
Proclaiming vengeance, public as my wrong,
And imprecating on his prostrate slaves
Rapine, and death, and outrage. Then I sail'd
Over the mighty fabric of the world,
A pirate ambush'd in its pathless sands,
A lynx crouch'd watchfully among its caves
And craggy shores; and I have wander'd over
The expanse of these wide wildernesses
In this great ship, whose bulk is now dissolved
In the light breathings of the invisible wind,
And which the sea has made a dustless ruin,
Seeking ever a mountain, through whose forests
I seek a man, whom I must now compel
To keep his word with me. I came array'd
In tempest; and although my power could well
Bridle the forest winds in their career,
For other causes I forbore to soothe
Their fury to Favonian gentleness,
I could and would not (thus I wake in him [*Aside.*
A love of magic art). Let not this tempest,
Nor the succeeding calm excite thy wonder;
For by my art the sun would turn as pale
As his weak sister with unwonted fear.
And in my wisdom are the orbs of Heaven
Written as in a record; I have pierced
The flaming circles of their wondrous spheres,
And know them as thou knowest every corner
Of this dim spot. Let it not seem to thee
That I boast vainly; wouldst thou that I work
A charm over this waste and savage wood,
This Babylon of crags and aged trees,
Filling its leafy coverts with a horror
Thrilling and strange? I am the friendless guest
Of these wild oaks and pines—and as from thee
I have received the hospitality
Of this rude place, I offer thee the fruit
Of years of toil in recompense; whate'er
Thy wildest dream presented to thy thought
As object of desire, that shall be thine.

* * * *

And thenceforth shall so firm an amity
'T wixt thou and me be, that neither fortune,
The monstrous phantom which pursues success,
That careful miser, that free prodigal,
Who ever alternates with changeful hand,
Evil and good, reproach and fame; nor Time,
That loadstar of the ages, to whose beam
The winged years speed o'er the intervals
Of their unequal revolutions; nor
Heaven itself, whose beautiful bright stars
Rule and adorn the world, can ever make
The least division between thee and me,
Since now I find a refuge in thy favour.

SCENE III.

The DÆMON *tempts* JUSTINA, *who is a Christian.*

DÆMON.

Abyss of Hell! I call on thee,
Thou wild misrule of thine own anarchy!
From thy prison-house set free
The spirits of voluptuous death,
That with their mighty breath
They may destroy a world of virgin thoughts;
Let her chaste mind with fancies thick as motes
Be peopled from thy shadowy deep,
Till her guiltless phantasy
Full to overflowing be!
And with sweetest harmony,
Let birds, and flowers, and leaves, and all things move
To love, only to love.
Let nothing meet her eyes
But signs of Love's soft victories;
Let nothing meet her ear
But sounds of love's sweet sorrow,
So that from faith no succour she may borrow,
But, guided by my spirit blind
And in a magic snare entwined,
She may now seek Cyprian.
Begin, while I in silence bind
My voice, when thy sweet song thou hast begun.

A VOICE WITHIN.

What is the glory far above
All else in human life?

ALL.

Love! love!

[*While these words are sung, the* DÆMON *goes out at one door, and* JUSTINA *enters at another.*

THE FIRST VOICE.

There is no form in which the fire
Of love its traces has impress'd not.
Man lives far more in love's desire
Than by life's breath, soon possess'd not.
If all that lives must love or die,
All shapes on earth, or sea, or sky,
With one consent to Heaven cry
That the glory far above
All else in life is—

ALL.

Love! O love!

JUSTINA.

Thou melancholy thought which art
So fluttering and so sweet, to thee
When did I give the liberty
Thus to afflict my heart?
What is the cause of this new power
Which doth my fever'd being move,
Momently raging more and more?
What subtle pain is kindled now
Which from my heart doth overflow
Into my senses?—

ALL.

Love, O love!

JUSTINA.

'T is that enamour'd nightingale
Who gives me the reply;
He ever tells the same soft tale
Of passion and of constancy
To his mate, who rapt and fond
Listening sits, a bough beyond.
Be silent, Nightingale—no more
Make me think, in hearing thee
Thus tenderly thy love deplore,
If a bird can feel his so,
What a man would feel for me.
And, voluptuous vine, O thou
Who seekest most when least pursuing,—
To the trunk thou interlacest
Art the verdure which embracest,
And the weight which is its ruin,—
No more, with green embraces, vine,
Make me think on what thou lovest,—
For whilst thou thus thy boughs entwine,
I fear lest thou shouldst teach me, sophist,
How arms might be entangled too.
Light-enchanted sunflower, thou
Who gazest ever true and tender
On the sun's revolving splendour!
Follow not his faithless glance
With thy faded countenance,
Nor teach my beating heart to fear,
If leaves can mourn without a tear,
How eyes must weep! O Nightingale,
Cease from thy enamour'd tale,—
Leafy vine, unwreathe thy bower,
Restless sunflower, cease to move,—
Or tell me all, what poisonous power
Ye use against me—

ALL.

Love! love! love!

JUSTINA.

It cannot be!—Whom have I ever loved?
Trophies of my oblivion and disdain,
Floro and Lelio did I not reject?
And Cyprian?—

[*She becomes troubled at the name of Cyprian.*

Did I not requite him
With such severity, that he has fled
Where none has ever heard of him again?—
Alas! I now begin to fear that this
May be the occasion whence desire grows bold,
As if there were no danger. From the moment
That I pronounced to my own listening heart,
Cyprian is absent, O me miserable!
I know not what I feel! [*More calmly.*
It must be pity,
To think that such a man, whom all the world
Admired, should be forgot by all the world,
And I the cause. [*She again becomes troubled.*
And yet if it were pity,
Floro and Lelio might have equal share,
For they are both imprison'd for my sake. [*Calmly.*
Alas! what reasonings are these? it is
Enough I pity him, and that in vain,
Without this ceremonious subtlety.
And woe is me! I know not where to find him now,
Even should I seek him through this wide world.

Enter DÆMON.

DÆMON.

Follow, and I will lead thee where he is.

JUSTINA.

And who art thou, who hast found entrance hither,
Into my chamber through the doors and locks?

Art thou a monstrous shadow which my madness
Has form'd in the idle air?

DÆMON.

No. I am one
Call'd by the thought which tyrannizes thee
From his eternal dwelling; who this day
Is pledged to bear thee unto Cyprian.

JUSTINA.

So shall thy promise fail. This agony
Of passion which afflicts my heart and soul
May sweep imagination in its storm;
The will is firm.

DÆMON.

Already half is done
In the imagination of an act.
The sin incurr'd, the pleasure then remains;
Let not the will stop half-way on the road.

JUSTINA.

I will not be discouraged, nor despair,
Although I thought it, and although 't is true,
That thought is but a prelude to the deed:—
Thought is not in my power, but action is:
I will not move my foot to follow thee.

DÆMON.

But far a mightier wisdom than thine own
Exerts itself within thee, with such power
Compelling thee to that which it inclines
That it shall force thy step; how wilt thou then
Resist, Justina?

JUSTINA.

By my free-will.

DÆMON.

I
Must force thy will.

JUSTINA.

It is invincible;
It were not free if thou hadst power upon it.

[*He draws, but cannot move her.*

DÆMON.

Come, where a pleasure waits thee.

JUSTINA.

It were bought
Too dear.

DÆMON.

'T will soothe thy heart to softest peace.

JUSTINA.

'T is dread captivity.

DÆMON.

'T is joy, 't is glory.

JUSTINA.

'T is shame, 't is torment, 't is despair.

DÆMON.

But how
Canst thou defend thyself from that or me,
If my power drags thee onward?

JUSTINA.

My defence
Consists in God.

[*He vainly endeavours to force her, and at last releases her.*

DÆMON.

Woman, thou hast subdued me,
Only by not owning thyself subdued.
But since thou thus findest defence in God,
I will assume a feigned form, and thus
Make thee a victim of my baffled rage.
For I will mask a spirit in thy form,
Who will betray thy name to infamy,
And doubly shall I triumph in thy loss,
First by dishonouring thee, and then by turning
False pleasure to true ignominy. [*Exit.*

JUSTINA.

I
Appeal to Heaven against thee; so that Heaven
May scatter thy delusions, and the blot
Upon my fame vanish in idle thought,
Even as flame dies in the envious air,
And as the floweret wanes at morning frost,
And thou shouldst never——But, alas! to whom
Do I still speak?—Did not a man but now
Stand here before me?—No, I am alone,
And yet I saw him. Is he gone so quickly?
Or can the heated mind engender shapes
From its own fear? Some terrible and strange
Peril is near. Lisander! father! lord!
Livia!—

Enter LISANDER *and* LIVIA.

LISANDER.

O, my daughter! What?

LIVIA.

What?

JUSTINA.

Saw you
A man go forth from my apartment now?—
I scarce sustain myself!

LISANDER.

A man here!

JUSTINA.

Have you not seen him?

LIVIA.

No, Lady.

JUSTINA.

I saw him.

LISANDER.

'T is impossible; the doors
Which led to this apartment were all lock'd.

LIVIA (*aside*).

I dare say it was Moscon whom she saw,
For he was lock'd up in my room.

LISANDER.

It must
Have been some image of thy phantasy:
Such melancholy as thou feedest, is
Skilful in forming such in the vain air
Out of the motes and atoms of the day.

LIVIA.

My master 's in the right.

JUSTINA.

O, would it were
Delusion! but I fear some greater ill.
I feel as if out of my bleeding bosom
My heart were torn in fragments; ay,
Some mortal spell is wrought against my frame;
So potent was the charm, that had not God
Shielded my humble innocence from wrong,
I should have sought my sorrow and my shame
With willing steps.—Livia, quick bring my cloak,
For I must seek refuge from these extremes
Even in the temple of the highest God
Which secretly the faithful worship.

LIVIA.

Here.

JUSTINA *(putting on her cloak).*

In this, as in a shroud of snow, may I
Quench the consuming fire in which I burn,
Wasting away!

LISANDER.

And I will go with thee.

LIVIA.

When I once see them safe out of the house
I shall breathe freely.

JUSTINA.

So do I confide
In thy just favour, Heaven!

LISANDER.

Let us go.

JUSTINA.

Thine is the cause, great God! turn for my sake,
And for thine own, mercifully to me!

TRANSLATION FROM MOSCHUS.

Pan loved his neighbour Echo—but that child
Of Earth and Air pined for the Satyr leaping;
The Satyr loved with wasting madness wild
The bright nymph Lyda,—and so three went weeping.
As Pan loved Echo, Echo loved the Satyr;
The Satyr, Lyda—and thus love consumed them.—
And thus to each—which was a woful matter—
To bear what they inflicted, justice doom'd them;
For inasmuch as each might hate the lover,
Each loving, so was hated.—Ye that love not
Be warn'd—in thought turn this example over,
That when ye love, the like return ye prove not.

SCENES

FROM THE FAUST OF GOETHE.

PROLOGUE IN HEAVEN.

The Lord *and the Host of Heaven.*

Enter three Archangels.

RAPHAEL.

The sun makes music as of old
Amid the rival spheres of Heaven,
On its predestined circle roll'd
With thunder speed: the Angels even
Draw strength from gazing on its glance,
Though none its meaning fathom may:—
The world's unwither'd countenance
Is bright as at creation's day.

GABRIEL.

And swift and swift, with rapid lightness,
The adorned Earth spins silently,
Alternating Elysian brightness
With deep and dreadful night; the sea
Foams in broad billows from the deep
Up to the rocks, and rocks and ocean,
Onward, with spheres which never sleep,
Are hurried in eternal motion.

MICHAEL.

And tempests in contention roar
From land to sea, from sea to land;
And, raging, weave a chain of power,
Which girds the earth, as with a band.
A flashing desolation there,
Flames before the thunder's way;
But thy servants, Lord! revere
The gentle changes of thy day.

CHORUS OF THE THREE.

The Angels draw strength from thy glance,
Though no one comprehend thee may;—
Thy world's unwither'd countenance
Is bright as on creation's day.[1]

Enter Mephistopheles.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

As thou, O Lord! once more art kind enough
To interest thyself in our affairs—
And ask, «How goes it with you there below?»
And as indulgently at other times
Thou tookedst not my visits in ill part,
Thou seest me here once more among thy household.
Though I should scandalize this company,
You will excuse me if I do not talk
In the high style which they think fashionable;
My pathos would certainly make you laugh too,
Had you not long since given over laughing.
Nothing know I to say of suns and worlds;
I observe only how men plague themselves;—
The little god o' the world keeps the same stamp,
As wonderful as on creation's day:—
A little better would he live, hadst thou
Not given him a glimpse of heaven's light,
Which he calls reason, and employs it only
To live more beastlily than any beast.
With reverence to your Lordship be it spoken,
He 's like one of those long-legg'd grasshoppers,
Who flits and jumps about, and sings for ever

[1] RAPHAEL.

The sun sounds, according to ancient custom,
In the song of emulation of his brother-spheres.
And its fore-written circle
Fulfills with a step of thunder.
Its countenance gives the Angels strength,
Though no one can fathom it,
The incredible high works
Are excellent as at the first day.

GABRIEL.

And swift, and inconceivably swift
The adornment of earth winds itself round,
And exchanges Paradise-clearness
With deep dreadful night.
The sea foams in broad waves
From its deep bottom, up to the rocks,
And rocks and sea are torn on together
In the eternal swift course of the spheres.

MICHAEL.

And storms roar in emulation
From sea to land, from land to sea,
And make, raging, a chain
Of deepest operation round about.
There flames a flashing destruction
Before the path of the thunderbolt.
But thy servants, Lord, revere
The gentle alternations of thy day.

CHORUS.

Thy countenance gives the Angels strength,
Though none can comprehend thee:
And all thy lofty works
Are excellent as at the first day.

Such is a literal translation of this astonishing Chorus; it is impossible to represent in another language the melody of the versification; even the volatile strength and delicacy of the ideas escape in the crucible of translation, and the reader is surprised to find a caput mortuum.—*Author's Note.*

The same old song i' the grass. There let him lie,
Burying his nose in every heap of dung.

THE LORD.

Have you no more to say? Do you come here
Always to scold, and cavil, and complain?
Seems nothing ever right to you on earth?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

No, Lord! I find all there, as ever, bad at best.
Even I am sorry for man's days of sorrow;
I could myself almost give up the pleasure
Of plaguing the poor things.

THE LORD.

Knowest thou Faust?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

The Doctor?

THE LORD.

Ay; my servant Faust.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

In truth
He serves you in a fashion quite his own;
And the fool's meat and drink are not of earth.
His aspirations bear him on so far
That he is half aware of his own folly,
For he demands from Heaven its fairest star,
And from the earth the highest joy it bears:
Yet all things far, and all things near, are vain
To calm the deep emotions of his breast.

THE LORD.

Though he now serves me in a cloud of error,
I will soon lead him forth to the clear day.
When trees look green, full well the gardener knows
That fruits and blooms will deck the coming year.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

What will you bet?—now I am sure of winning:
Only, observe you give me full permission
To lead him softly on my path.

THE LORD.

As long
As he shall live upon the earth, so long
Is nothing unto thee forbidden—Man
Must err till he has ceased to struggle.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Thanks.
And that is all I ask; for willingly
I never make acquaintance with the dead.
The full fresh cheeks of youth are food for me;
And if a corpse knocks, I am not at home.
For I am like a cat—I like to play
A little with the mouse before I eat it.

THE LORD.

Well, well! it is permitted thee. Draw thou
His spirit from its springs; as thou find'st power,
Seize him and lead him on thy downward path;
And stand ashamed when failure teaches thee
That a good man, even in his darkest longings,
Is well aware of the right way.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Well and good.
I am not in much doubt about my bet;
And if I lose, then 't is your turn to crow;
Enjoy your triumph then with a full breast.
Ay! dust shall he devour, and that with pleasure,
Like my old paramour, the famous Snake.

THE LORD.

Pray come here when it suits you; for I never
Had much dislike for people of your sort.
And, among all the Spirits who rebell'd,
The knave was ever the least tedious to me.
The active spirit of man soon sleeps, and soon
He seeks unbroken quiet; therefore I
Have given him the Devil for a companion,
Who may provoke him to some sort of work,
And must create for ever.—But ye, pure
Children of God, enjoy eternal beauty;—
Let that which ever operates and lives
Clasp you within the limits of its love;
And seize with sweet and melancholy thoughts
The floating phantoms of its loveliness.

[*Heaven closes; the Archangels exeunt.*

MEPHISTOPHELES.

From time to time I visit the old fellow,
And I take care to keep on good terms with him.
Civil enough is this same God Almighty,
To talk so freely with the Devil himself.

MAY-DAY NIGHT.

SCENE—*The Hartz Mountain, a desolate Country.*

FAUST, MEPHISTOPHELES.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

WOULD you not like a broomstick? As for me,
I wish I had a good stout ram to ride;
For we are still far from th' appointed place.

FAUST.

This knotted staff is help enough for me,
Whilst I feel fresh upon my legs. What good
Is there in making short a pleasant way?
To creep along the labyrinths of the vales,
And climb those rocks, where ever-babbling springs
Precipitate themselves in waterfalls,
Is the true sport that seasons such a path.
Already Spring kindles the birchen spray,
And the hoar pines already feel her breath:
Shall she not work also within our limbs?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Nothing of such an influence do I feel:
My body is all wintry, and I wish
The flowers upon our path were frost and snow.
But see, how melancholy rises now,
Dimly uplifting her belated beam,
The blank unwelcome round of the red moon,
And gives so bad a light, that every step
One stumbles 'gainst some crag. With your permission,
I 'll call an Ignis-fatuus to our aid;
I see one yonder burning jollily.
Halloo, my friend! may I request that you
Would favour us with your bright company?
Why should you blaze away there to no purpose?
Pray be so good as light us up this way.

IGNIS-FATUUS.

With reverence be it spoken, I will try
To overcome the lightness of my nature:
Our course, you know, is generally zig-zag.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Ha, ha! your worship thinks you have to deal
With men. Go straight on, in the Devil's name,
Or I shall puff your flickering life out.

IGNIS-FATUUS.

Well,
I see you are the master of the house;
I will accommodate myself to you.

Only consider, that to-night this mountain
Is all enchanted, and if Jack-a-lantern
Shows you his way, though you should miss your own,
You ought not to be too exact with him.

FAUST, MEPHISTOPHELES, *and* IGNIS-FATUUS, *in alternate Chorus.*

The limits of the sphere of dream,
The bounds of true and false, are past.
Lead us on, thou wandering Gleam,
Lead us onward, far and fast,
To the wide, the desert waste.

But see, how swift advance and shift,
Trees behind trees, row by row,—
How, clift by clift, rocks bend and lift
Their frowning foreheads as we go.
The giant-snouted crags, ho! ho!
How they snort, and how they blow!

Through the mossy sods and stones
Stream and streamlet hurry down,
A rushing throng! A sound of song
Beneath the vault of Heaven is blown!
Sweet notes of love, the speaking tones
Of this bright day, sent down to say
That Paradise on Earth is known,
Resound around, beneath, above.
All we hope and all we love
Finds a voice in this blithe strain,
Which wakens hill and wood and rill,
And vibrates far o'er field and vale,
And which Echo, like the tale
Of old times, repeats again.

Tu-whoo! tu-whoo! near, nearer now
The sound of song, the rushing throng!
Are the screech, the lapwing, and the jay.
All awake as if 't were day?

See, with long legs and belly wide,
A salamander in the brake!
Every root is like a snake,
And along the loose hill-side,
With strange contortions through the night,
Curls, to seize or to affright;
And, animated, strong, and many,
They dart forth polypus-antennæ,
To blister with their poison spume
The wanderer. Through the dazzling gloom
The many-colour'd mice, that thread
The dewy turf beneath our tread,
In troops each other's motions cross,
Through the heath and through the moss;
And, in legions intertangled,
The fire-flies flit, and swarm, and throng,
Till all the mountain depths are spangled.

Tell me, shall we go or stay?
Shall we onward? Come along!
Everything around is swept
Forward, onward, far away!
Trees and masses intercept
The sight, and wisps on every side
Are puff'd up and multiplied.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Now vigorously seize my skirt, and gain
This pinnacle of isolated crag.
One may observe with wonder from this point,
How Mammon glows among the mountains.

FAUST.

Ay—
And strangely through the solid depth below
A melancholy light, like the red dawn,
Shoots from the lowest gorge of the abyss
Of mountains, lightening hitherward: there rise
Pillars of smoke, here clouds float gently by;
Here the light burns soft as the enkindled air,
Or the illumined dust of golden flowers;
And now it glides like tender colours spreading;
And now bursts forth in fountains from the earth;
And now it winds, one torrent of broad light,
Through the far valley with a hundred veins;
And now once more within that narrow corner
Masses itself into intensest splendour.
And near us, see, sparks spring out of the ground,
Like golden sand scatter'd upon the darkness;
The pinnacles of that black wall of mountains
That hems us in, are kindled.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Rare, in faith!
Does not Sir Mammon gloriously illuminate
His palace for this festival—it is
A pleasure which you had not known before.
I spy the boisterous guests already.

FAUST.

How
The children of the wind rage in the air!
With what fierce strokes they fall upon my neck!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Cling tightly to the old ribs of the crag.
Beware! for if with them thou warrest
In their fierce flight towards the wilderness,
Their breath will sweep thee into dust, and drag
Thy body to a grave in the abyss.
A cloud thickens the night.
Hark! how the tempest crashes through the forest!
The owls fly out in strange affright;
The columns of the evergreen palaces
Are split and shatter'd;
The roots creak, and stretch, and groan;
And ruinously overthrown,
The trunks are crush'd and shatter'd
By the fierce blast's unconquerable stress.
Over each other crack and crash they all,
In terrible and intertangled fall;
And through the ruins of the shaken mountain
The airs hiss and howl—
It is not the voice of the fountain,
Nor the wolf in his midnight prowl.
Dost thou not hear?
Strange accents are ringing
Aloft, afar, anear;
The witches are singing!
The torrent of a raging wizard song
Streams the whole mountain along.

CHORUS OF WITCHES.

The stubble is yellow, the corn is green,
Now to the brocken the witches go;
The mighty multitude here may be seen
Gathering, wizard and witch, below.

Sir Urean is sitting aloft in the air;
Hey over stock! and hey over stone!
'Twixt witches and incubi, what shall be done?
Tell it who dare! tell it who dare!

A VOICE.

Upon a sow-swine, whose farrows were nine,
Old Baubo rideth alone.

CHORUS.

Honour her, to whom honour is due,
Old mother Baubo, honour to you!
An able sow, with old Baubo upon her,
Is worthy of glory, and worthy of honour!
The legion of witches is coming behind,
Darkening the night, and outspeeding the wind—

A VOICE.

Which way comest thou?

A VOICE.

Over Ilsenstein.
The owl was awake in the white moonshine:
I saw her at rest in her downy nest,
And she stared at me with her broad, bright eye.

VOICES.

And you may now as well take your course on to Hell,
Since you ride by so fast on the headlong blast.

A VOICE.

She dropp'd poison upon me as I past.
Here are the wounds——

CHORUS OF WITCHES.

Come away! come along!
The way is wide, the way is long,
But what is that for a Bedlam throng?
Stick with the prong, and scratch with the broom,
The child in the cradle lies strangled at home,
And the mother is clapping her hands.

SEMI-CHORUS OF WIZARDS I.

We glide in
Like snails when the women are all away;
And from a house once given over to sin
Woman has a thousand steps to stray.

SEMI-CHORUS II.

A thousand steps must a woman take,
Where a man but a single spring will make.

VOICES ABOVE.

Come with us, come with us, from Felunsee.

VOICES BELOW.

With what joy would we fly through the upper sky!
We are wash'd, we are 'nointed, stark naked are we;
But our toil and our pain are for ever in vain.

BOTH CHORUSSES.

The wind is still, the stars are fled,
The melancholy moon is dead;
The magic notes, like spark on spark,
Drizzle, whistling through the dark.
Come away!

VOICES BELOW.

Stay, oh stay!

VOICES ABOVE.

Out of the crannics of the rocks
Who calls?

VOICES BELOW.

Oh, let me join your flocks!
I, three hundred years have striven
To catch your skirt and mount to Heaven,—
And still in vain. Oh, might I be
With company akin to me!

BOTH CHORUSSES.

Some on a ram and some on a prong,
On poles and on broomsticks we flutter along;
Forlorn is the wight who can rise not to-night.

A HALF-WITCH BELOW.

I have been tripping this many an hour:
Are the others already so far before?
No quiet at home, and no peace abroad!
And less methinks is found by the road.

CHORUS OF WITCHES.

Come onward away! aroint thee, aroint!
A witch to be strong must anoint—anoint—
Then every trough will be boat enough;
With a rag for a sail we can sweep through the sky—
Who flies not to-night, when means he to fly?

BOTH CHORUSSES.

We cling to the skirt, and we strike on the ground;
Witch-legions thicken around and around:
Wizard-swarms cover the heath all over.
[*They descend.*

MEPHISTOPHELES.

What thronging, dashing, raging, rustling;
What whispering, babbling, hissing, bustling;
What glimmering, spurting, stinking, burning,
As Heaven and Earth were overturning.
There is a true witch element about us!
Take hold on me, or we shall be divided:—
Where are you?

FAUST (*from a distance*).

Here!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

What?
I must exert my authority in the house!
Place for young Voland—Pray make way, good people.
Take hold on me, Doctor, and with one step
Let us escape from this unpleasant crowd:
They are too mad for people of my sort.
Just there shines a peculiar kind of light—
Something attracts me in those bushes. Come
This way: we shall slip down there in a minute.

FAUST.

Spirit of Contradiction! Well, lead on—
'T were a wise feat indeed to wander out
Into the brocken upon May-day night,
And then to isolate oneself in scorn,
Disgusted with the humours of the time.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

See yonder, round a many-colour'd flame
A merry club is huddled altogether:
Even with such little people as sit there,
One would not be alone.

FAUST.

Would that I were
Up yonder in the glow and whirling smoke,
Where the blind million rush impetuously
To meet the evil ones; there might I solve
Many a riddle that torments me!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Yet
Many a riddle there is tied anew
Inextricably. Let the great world rage!
We will stay here safe in the quiet dwellings.
'T is an old custom. Men have ever built
Their own small world in the great world of all.
I see young witches naked there, and old ones
Wisely attired with greater decency.

Be guided now by me, and you shall buy
A pound of pleasure with a dram of trouble.
I hear them tune their instruments—one must
Get used to this damn'd scraping. Come, I 'll lead you
Among them; and what there you do and see,
As a fresh compact 'twixt us two shall be.
How say you now? this space is wide enough—
Look forth, you cannot see the end of it—
An hundred bonfires burn in rows, and they
Who throng around them seem innumerable:
Dancing and drinking, jabbering, making love,
And cooking, are at work. Now tell me, friend,
What is there better in the world than this?

FAUST.

In introducing us, do you assume
The character of wizard or of devil?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

In truth, I generally go about
In strict incognito; and yet one likes
To wear one's orders upon gala days.
I have no ribbon at my knee; but here
At home, the cloven foot is honourable.
See you that snail there?—she comes creeping up,
And with her feeling eyes hath smelt out something;
I could not, if I would, mask myself here.
Come now, we 'll go about from fire to fire:
I 'll be the pimp, and you shall be the lover.

[*To some Old Women, who are sitting round a heap of glimmering coals.*

Old gentlewomen, what do you do out here?
You ought to be with the young rioters
Right in the thickest of the revelry—
But every one is best content at home.

GENERAL.

Who dare confide in right or a just claim?
So much as I had done for them! and now—
With women and the people 't is the same,
Youth will stand foremost ever,—age may go
To the dark grave unhonour'd.

MINISTER.

Now-a-days
People assert their rights: they go too far;
But as for me, the good old times I praise;
Then we were all in all, 't was something worth
One's while to be in place and wear a star;
That was indeed the golden age on earth.

PARVENU.[1]

We too are active, and we did and do
What we ought not, perhaps; and yet we now
Will seize, whilst all things are whirl'd round and round,
A spoke of Fortune's wheel, and keep our ground.

AUTHOR.

Who now can taste a treatise of deep sense
And ponderous volume? 't is impertinence
To write what none will read, therefore will I
To please the young and thoughtless people try.

MEPHISTOPHELES (*who at once appears to have grown very old*).

I find the people ripe for the last day,
Since I last came up to the wizard mountain;
And as my little cask runs turbid now,
So is the world drain'd to the dregs.

PEDLAR-WITCH.

Look here,
Gentlemen; do not hurry on so fast,
And lose the chance of a good pennyworth.
I have a pack full of the choicest wares
Of every sort, and yet in all my bundle
Is nothing like what may be found on earth;
Nothing that in a moment will make rich
Men and the world with fine malicious mischief—
There is no dagger drunk with blood; no bowl
From which consuming poison may be drain'd
By innocent and healthy lips; no jewel,
The price of an abandon'd maiden's shame;
No sword which cuts the bond it cannot loose,
Or stabs the wearer's enemy in the back;
No——

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Gossip, you know little of these times.
What has been, has been; what is done, is past.
They shape themselves into the innovations
They breed, and innovation drags us with it.
The torrent of the crowd sweeps over us,
You think to impel, and are yourself impell'd.

FAUST.

Who is that yonder?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Mark her well. It is
Lilith.

FAUST.

Who?

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Lilith, the first wife of Adam.
Beware of her fair hair, for she excels
All women in the magic of her locks;
And when she winds them round a young man's neck,
She will not ever set him free again.

FAUST.

There sit a girl and an old woman—they
Seem to be tired with pleasure and with play.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

There is no rest to-night for any one:
When one dance ends another is begun;
Come, let us to it; we shall have rare fun.

[FAUST *dances and sings with a Girl, and* MEPHISTOPHELES *with an Old Woman.*

BROCTO-PHANTASMIST.

What is this cursed multitude about?
Have we not long since proved to demonstration
That ghosts move not on ordinary feet?
But these are dancing just like men and women.

THE GIRL.

What does he want then at our ball?

FAUST.

Oh! he
Is far above us all in his conceit:
Whilst we enjoy, he reasons of enjoyment;
And any step which in our dance we tread,
If it be left out of his reckoning,
Is not to be consider'd as a step.
There are few things that scandalize him not:
And when you whirl round in the circle now,
As he went round the wheel in his old mill,
He says that you go wrong in all respects,
Especially if you congratulate him
Upon the strength of the resemblance.

BROCTO-PHANTASMIST.

Fly!
Vanish! Unheard of impudence! What, still there!

[1] A sort of fundholder.

In this enlightened age too, since you have been
Proved not to exist!—But this infernal brood
Will hear no reason and endure no rule.
Are we so wise, and is the *pond* still haunted?
How long have I been sweeping out this rubbish
Of superstition, and the world will not
Come clean with all my pains!—it is a case
Unheard of!

THE GIRL.

Then leave off teasing us so.

BROCTO-PHANTASMIST.

I tell you, spirits, to your faces now,
That I should not regret this despotism
Of spirits, but that mine can wield it not.
To-night I shall make poor work of it;
Yet I will take a round with you, and hope
Before my last step in the living dance
To beat the poet and the devil together.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

At last he will sit down in some foul puddle!
That is his way of solacing himself;
Until some leech, diverted with his gravity,
Cures him of spirits and the spirit together.
[*To* FAUST, *who has seceded from the dance.*
Why do you let that fair girl pass from you,
Who sung so sweetly to you in the dance?

FAUST.

A red mouse in the middle of her singing
Sprang from her mouth.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

That was all right, my friend;
Be it enough that the mouse was not grey.
Do not disturb your hour of happiness
With close consideration of such trifles.

FAUST.

Then saw I——

MEPHISTOPHELES.

What?

FAUST.

Seest thou not a pale
Fair girl, standing alone, far, far away?
She drags herself now forward with slow steps,
And seems as if she moved with shackled feet:
I cannot overcome the thought that she
Is like poor Margaret.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Let it be—pass on—
No good can come of it—it is not well
To meet it—it is an enchanted phantom,
A lifeless idol; with its numbing look,
It freezes up the blood of man; and they
Who meet its ghastly stare are turn'd to stone,
Like those who saw Medusa.

FAUST.

Oh, too true!
Her eyes are like the eyes of a fresh corpse
Which no beloved hand has closed, alas!
That is the heart which Margaret yielded to me—
Those are the lovely limbs which I enjoy'd!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

It is all magic, poor deluded fool!
She looks to every one like his first love.

FAUST.

Oh, what delight! what woe! I cannot turn
My looks from her sweet piteous countenance.
How strangely does a single blood-red line,
Not broader than the sharp edge of a knife,
Adorn her lovely neck!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Ay, she can carry
Her head under her arm upon occasion;
Perseus has cut it off for her. These pleasures
End in delusion.—Gain this rising ground,
It is as airy here as in a [ ]
And if I am not mightily deceived,
I see a theatre—What may this mean?

ATTENDANT.

Quite a new piece, the last of seven, for 't is
The custom now to represent that number.
'T is written by a Dilettante, and
The actors who perform are Dilettanti;
Excuse me, gentleman; but I must vanish,
I am a Dilettante curtain-lifter.

FRAGMENTS.

GINEVRA.[1]

WILD, pale, and wonder-stricken, even as one
Who staggers forth into the air and sun
From the dark chamber of a mortal fever,
Bewilder'd, and incapable, and ever
Fancying strange comments in her dizzy brain
Of usual shapes, till the familiar train
Of objects and of persons pass'd like things
Strange as a dreamer's mad imaginings,
Ginevra from the nuptial altar went;
The vows to which her lips had sworn assent
Rung in her brain still with a jarring din,
Deafening the lost intelligence within.

And so she moved under the bridal veil,
Which made the paleness of her cheek more pale,
And deepen'd the faint crimson of her mouth,
And darken'd her dark locks, as moonlight doth,—
And of the gold and jewels glittering there
She scarce felt conscious,—but the weary glare
Lay like a chaos of unwelcome light,
Vexing the sense with gorgeous undelight.
A moonbeam in the shadow of a cloud
Was less heavenly fair—her face was bow'd,
And as she pass'd, the diamonds in her hair
Were mirror'd in the polish'd marble stair
Which led from the cathedral to the street;
And ever as she went her light fair feet
Erased these images.

The bride-maidens who round her thronging came,
Some with a sense of self-rebuke and shame,
Envying the unenviable; and others
Making the joy which should have been another's
Their own by gentle sympathy; and some
Sighing to think of an unhappy home:
Some few admiring what can ever lure
Maidens to leave the heaven serene and pure
Of parents' smiles for life's great cheat; a thing
Bitter to taste, sweet in imagining.

[1] This fragment is part of a poem which Mr Shelley intended to write, founded on a story to be found in the first volume of a book entitled « L'Osservatore Fiorentino. »

But they are all dispersed—and, lo! she stands
Looking in idle grief on her white hands,
Alone within the garden now her own;
And through the sunny air, with jangling tone,
The music of the merry marriage bells,
Killing the azure silence, sinks and swells;—
Absorb'd like one within a dream who dreams
That he is dreaming, until slumber seems
A mockery of itself—when suddenly
Antonio stood before her, pale as she.
With agony, with sorrow, and with pride,
He lifted his wan eyes upon the bride,
And said—« Is this thy faith?» and then as one
Whose sleeping face is stricken by the sun
With light like a harsh voice, which bids him rise
And look upon his day of life with eyes
Which weep in vain that they can dream no more,
Ginevra saw her lover, and forbore
To shriek or faint, and check'd the stifling blood
Rushing upon her heart, and unsubdued
Said—« Friend, if earthly violence or ill,
Suspicion, doubt, or the tyrannic will
Of parents, chance, or custom, time or change,
Or circumstance, or terror, or revenge,
Or wilder'd looks, or words, or evil speech,
With all their stings [ ] can impeach
Our love,—we love not:—if the grave which hides
The victim from the tyrant, and divides
The cheek that whitens from the eyes that dart
Imperious inquisition to the heart
That is another's, could dissever ours,
We love not.»—« What, do not the silent hours
Beckon thee to Gherardi's bridal-bed?
Is not that ring»——a pledge, he would have said,
Of broken vows, but she with patient look
The golden circle from her finger took,
And said—« Accept this token of my faith,
The pledge of vows to be absolved by death;
And I am dead or shall be soon—my knell
Will mix its music with that merry bell:
Does it not sound as if they sweetly said,
'We toll a corpse out of the marriage-bed?'
The flowers upon my bridal-chamber strewn
Will serve unfaded for my bier—so soon
That even the dying violet will not die
Before Ginevra.» The strong fantasy
Had made her accents weaker and more weak,
And quench'd the crimson life upon her cheek,
And glazed her eyes, and spread an atmosphere
Round her, which chill'd the burning noon with fear,
Making her but an image of the thought,
Which, like a prophet or a shadow, brought
News of the terrors of the coming time.
Like an accuser branded with the crime
He would have cast on a beloved friend,
Whose dying eyes reproach not to the end
The pale betrayer—he then with vain repentance
Would share, he cannot now avert, the sentence—
Antonio stood and would have spoken, when
The compound voice of women and of men
Was heard approaching; he retired, while she
Was led amid the admiring company
Back to the palace,—and her maidens soon
Changed her attire for the afternoon,
And left her at her own request to keep
An hour of quiet and rest:—like one asleep
With open eyes and folded hands she lay,
Pale in the light of the declining day.

Meanwhile the day sinks fast, the sun is set,
And in the lighted hall the guests are met;
The beautiful looked lovelier in the light
Of love, and admiration, and delight
Reflected from a thousand hearts and eyes,
Kindling a momentary Paradise.
This crowd is safer than the silent wood,
Where love's own doubts disturb the solitude;
On frozen hearts the fiery rain of wine
Falls, and the dew of music more divine
Tempers the deep emotions of the time
To spirits cradled in a sunny clime:—
How many meet, who never yet have met,
To part too soon, but never to forget.
How many saw the beauty, power and wit
Of looks and words which ne'er enchanted yet;
But life's familiar veil was now withdrawn,
As the world leaps before an earthquake's dawn,
And unprophetic of the coming hours,
The matin winds from the expanded flowers
Scatter their hoarded incense, and awaken
The earth, until the dewy sleep is shaken
From every living heart which it possesses,
Through seas and winds, cities and wildernesses,
As if the future and the past were all
Treasured i' the instant;—so Gherardi's hall
Laugh'd in the mirth of its lord's festival,
Till some one ask'd—« Where is the Bride?» And then
A bride's-maid went,—and ere she came again
A silence fell upon the guests—a pause
Of expectation, as when beauty awes
All hearts with its approach, though unbeheld;
Then wonder, and then fear that wonder quell'd;—
For whispers pass'd from mouth to ear which drew
The colour from the hearer's cheeks, and flew
Louder and swifter round the company;
And then Gherardi enter'd with an eye
Of ostentatious trouble, and a crowd
Surrounded him, and some were weeping loud.

They found Ginevra dead! if it be death,
To lie without motion, or pulse, or breath,
With waxen cheeks, and limbs cold, stiff, and white,
And open eyes, whose fix'd and glassy light
Mock'd at the speculation they had own'd.
If it be death, when there is felt around
A smell of clay, a pale and icy glare,
And silence, and a sense that lifts the hair
From the scalp to the ancles, as it were
Corruption from the spirit passing forth,
And giving all it shrouded to the earth,
And leaving as swift lightning in its flight
Ashes, and smoke, and darkness: in our night
Of thought we know thus much of death,—no more
Than the unborn dream of our life before
Their barks are wreck'd on its inhospitable shore.
The marriage feast and its solemnity
Was turn'd to funeral pomp—the company
With heavy hearts and looks, broke up; nor they
Who loved the dead went weeping on their way
Alone, but sorrow mix'd with sad surprise
Loosen'd the springs of pity in all eyes,
On which that form, whose fate they weep in vain,
Will never, thought they, kindle smiles again.

The lamps which, half extinguish'd in their haste,
Gleam'd few and faint o'er the abandon'd feast,
Show'd as it were within the vaulted room
A cloud of sorrow hanging, as if gloom
Had pass'd out of men's minds into the air.
Some few yet stood around Gherardi there,
Friends and relations of the dead,—and he,
A loveless man, accepted torpidly
The consolation that he wanted not,—
Awe in the place of grief within him wrought.
Their whispers made the solemn silence seem
More still—some wept, [ ]
Some melted into tears without a sob,
And some with hearts that might be heard to throb
Leant on the table, and at intervals
Shudder'd to hear through the deserted halls
And corridors the thrilling shrieks which came
Upon the breeze of night, that shook the flame
Of every torch and taper as it swept
From out the chamber where the women kept;—
Their tears fell on the dear companion cold
Of pleasures now departed; then was knoll'd
The bell of death, and soon the priests arrived,
And finding death their penitent had shrived,
Return'd like ravens from a corpse whereon
A vulture has just feasted to the bone.
And then the mourning women came.—
* * * * * * *

THE DIRGE.

Old winter was gone
In his weakness back to the mountains hoar,
And the spring came down
From the planet that hovers upon the shore
Where the sea of sunlight encroaches
On the limits of wintry night;
If the land, and the air, and the sea
Rejoice not when spring approaches,
We did not rejoice in thee,
Ginevra!
She is still, she is cold
On the bridal couch,
One step to the white death-bed,
And one to the bier,
And one to the charnel—and one, O where?
The dark arrow fled
In the noon.
Ere the sun through heaven once more has roll'd,
The rats in her heart
Will have made their nest,
And the worms be alive in her golden hair;
While the spirit that guides the sun,
Sits throned in his flaming chair,
She shall sleep.
* * * * * *

Pisa, 1821.

CHARLES THE FIRST.

A FRAGMENT.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

The Pageant to [celebrate] the arrival of the Queen.

A PURSUIVANT.

Place, for the Marshal of the Masque!

FIRST SPEAKER.

What thinkest thou of this quaint masque, which turns,
Like morning from the shadow of the night,
The night to day, and London to a place
Of peace and joy?

SECOND SPEAKER.

And Hell to Heaven.
Eight years are gone,
And they seem hours, since in this populous street
I trod on grass made green by summer's rain,
For the red plague kept state within that palace
Where now reigns vanity—in nine years more
The roots will be refresh'd with civil blood;
And thank the mercy of insulted Heaven
That sin and wrongs wound, as an orphan's cry,
The patience of the great Avenger's ear.

THIRD SPEAKER (*a youth*).

Yet, father, 't is a happy sight to see,
Beautiful, innocent, and unforbidden
By God or man; —'t is like the bright procession
Of skiey visions in a solemn dream
From which men wake as from a paradise,
And draw new strength to tread the thorns of life.
If God be good, wherefore should this be evil?
And if this be not evil, dost thou not draw
Unseasonable poison from the flowers
Which bloom so rarely in this barren world?
O, kill these bitter thoughts, which make the present
Dark as the future!—
* * * * * * * * * *
When avarice and tyranny, vigilant fear,
And open-eyed conspiracy lie sleeping,
As on Hell's threshold; and all gentle thoughts
Waken to worship him who giveth joys
With his own gift.

SECOND SPEAKER.

How young art thou in this old age of time!
How green in this grey world! Canst thou not think
Of change in that low scene, in which thou art
Not a spectator but an actor? [ ]
The day that dawns in fire will die in storms,
Even though the noon be calm. My travel's done;
Before the whirlwind wakes I shall have found
My inn of lasting rest, but thou must still
Be journeying on in this inclement air.
* * * * * * * * *

FIRST SPEAKER.

That
Is the Archbishop.

SECOND SPEAKER.

Rather say the Pope.
London will be soon his Rome: he walks
As if he trod upon the heads of men.
He looks elate, drunken with blood and gold;—
Beside him moves the Babylonian woman
Invisibly, and with her as with his shadow,
Mitred adulterer! he is join'd in sin,
Which turns Heaven's milk of mercy to revenge.

ANOTHER CITIZEN (*lifting up his eyes*).

Good Lord! rain it down upon him. [ ]
Amid her ladies walks the papist queen,
As if her nice feet scorn'd our English earth.
There' s old Sir Henry Vane, the Earl of Pembroke,
Lord Essex, and Lord Keeper Coventry,
And others who make base their English breed
By vile participation of their honours

With papists, atheists, tyrants, and apostates.
When lawyers mask, 't is time for honest men
To strip the vizor from their purposes.
* * * * * * * * *

FOURTH SPEAKER (*a pursuivant*).

Give place, give place!—
You torch-bearers advance to the great gate,
And then attend the Marshal of the Masque
Into the Royal presence.

FIFTH SPEAKER (*a law-student*).

What thinkest thou
Of this quaint show of ours, my aged friend?

FIRST SPEAKER.

I will not think but that our country's wounds
May yet be heal'd—The king is just and gracious,
Though wicked counsels now pervert his will:
These once cast off—

SECOND SPEAKER.

As adders cast their skins
And keep their venom, so kings often change;
Councils and counsellors hang on one another,
Hiding the loathsome [ ]
Like the base patchwork of a leper's rags.

THIRD SPEAKER.

O, still those dissonant thoughts—List! loud music
Grows on the enchanted air! And see, the torches
Restlessly flashing, and the crowd divided
Like waves before an Admiral's prow.
* * * * * * * * *

ANOTHER SPEAKER.

Give place—
To the Marshal of the Masque!

THIRD SPEAKER.

How glorious! See those thronging chariots
Rolling like painted clouds before the wind:
Some are
Like curved shells dyed by the azure depths
Of Indian seas; some like the new-born moon;
And some like cars in which the Romans climb'd
(Canopied by Victory's eagle wings outspread)
The Capitolian—See how gloriously
The mettled horses in the torchlight stir
Their gallant riders, while they check their pride,
Like shapes of some diviner element!

SECOND SPEAKER.

Ay, there they are—
Nobles, and sons of nobles, patentees,
Monopolists, and stewards of this poor farm,
On whose lean sheep sit the prophetic crows.
Here is the pomp that strips the houseless orphan,
Here is the pride that breaks the desolate heart.
These are the lilies glorious as Solomon,
Who toil not, neither do they spin,—unless
It be the webs they catch poor rogues withal.
Here is the surfeit which to them who earn
The niggard wages of the earth, scarce leaves
The tithe that will support them till they crawl
Back to its cold hard bosom. Here is health
Follow'd by grim disease, glory by shame,
Waste by lame famine, wealth by squalid want,
And England's sin by England's punishment.
And, as the effect pursues the cause foregone,
Lo, giving substance to my words, behold
At once the sign and the thing signified—
A troop of cripples, beggars, and lean outcasts,
Horsed upon stumbling shapes, carted with dung,
Dragg'd for a day from cellars and low cabins
And rotten hiding-holes, to point the moral
Of this presentiment, and bring up the rear
Of painted pomp with misery!

SPEAKER.

'T is but
The anti-masque, and serves as discords do
In sweetest music. Who would love May flowers
If they succeeded not to Winter's flaw;
Or day unchanged by night; or joy itself
Without the touch of sorrow?
* * * * * * * *

SCENE II.

A Chamber in Whitehall.

Enter the KING, QUEEN, LAUD, WENTWORTH, *and* ARCHY.

KING.

Thanks, gentlemen, I heartily accept
This token of your service: your gay masque
Was performed gallantly.

QUEEN.

And, gentlemen,
Call your poor Queen your debtor. Your quaint pageant
Rose on me like the figures of past years,
Treading their still path back to infancy,
More beautiful and mild as they draw nearer
The quiet cradle. I could have almost wept
To think I was in Paris, where these shows
Are well devised—such as I was ere yet
My young heart shared with [ ] the task,
The careful weight of this great monarchy.
There, gentlemen, between the sovereign's pleasure
And that which it regards, no clamour lifts
Its proud interposition.
* * * * *

KING.

My lord of Canterbury.

ARCHY.

The fool is here.

LAUD.

I crave permission of your Majesty
To order that this insolent fellow be
Chastised: he mocks the sacred character,
Scoffs at the stake, and—

KING.

What, my Archy!
He mocks and mimics all he sees and hears,
Yet with a quaint and graceful licence—Prithee
For this once do not as Prynne would, were he
Primate of England.
He lives in his own world; and, like a parrot,
Hung in his gilded prison from the window
Of a queen's bower over the public way,
Blasphemes with a bird's mind:—his words, like arrows
Which know no aim beyond the archer's wit,
Strikes sometimes what eludes philosophy.

QUEEN.

Go, sirrah, and repent of your offence
Ten minutes in the rain: be it your penance
To bring news how the world goes there. Poor Archy
He weaves about himself a world of mirth
Out of this wreck of ours.

LAUD.

I take with patience, as my master did,
All scoffs permitted from above.

KING.

My Lord,
Pray overlook these papers. Archy's words
Had wings, but these have talons.

QUEEN.

And the lion
That wears them must be tamed. My dearest lord,
I see the new-born courage in your eye
Arm'd to strike dead the spirit of the time.
* * * * *
Do thou persist: for, faint but in resolve,
And it were better thou had still remain'd
The slave of thine own slaves, who tear like curs
The fugitive, and flee from the pursuer!
And Opportunity, that empty wolf,
Flies at his throat who falls. Subdue thy actions
Even to the disposition of thy purpose,
And be that temper'd as the Ebro's steel:
And banish weak-eyed Mercy to the weak,
Whence she will greet thee with a gift of peace,
And not betray thee with a traitor's kiss,
As when she keeps the company of rebels,
Who think that she is fear. This do, lest we
Should fall as from a glorious pinnacle
In a bright dream, and wake as from a dream
Out of our worshipp'd state.
* * * * *

LAUD.

* * And if this suffice not,
Unleash the sword and fire, that in their thirst
They may lick up that scum of schismatics.
I laugh at those weak rebels who, desiring
What we possess, still prate of christian peace,
As if those dreadful messengers of wrath,
Which play the part of God 'twixt right and wrong,
Should be let loose against innocent sleep
Of templed cities and the smiling fields,
For some poor argument of policy
Which touches our own profit or our pride,
Where indeed it were christian charity
To turn the cheek even to the smiter's hand:
And when our great Redeemer, when our God
Is scorn'd in his immediate ministers,
They talk of peace:
Such peace as Canaan found, let Scotland now.
* * * * *

QUEEN.

My beloved lord,
Have you not noted that the fool of late
Has lost his careless mirth, and that his words
Sound like the echoes of our saddest fears?
What can it mean? I should be loth to think
Some factious slave had tutor'd him.

KING.

It partly is,
That our minds piece the vacant intervals
Of his wild words with their own fashioning;
As in the imagery of summer clouds,
Or coals in the winter fire, idlers find
The perfect shadows of their teeming thoughts:
And partly, that the terrors of the time
Are sown by wandering Rumour in all spirits;
And in the lightest and the least, may best
Be seen the current of the coming wind.

QUEEN.

Your brain is overwrought with these deep thoughts;
Come, I will sing to you; let us go try
These airs from Italy,—and you shall see
A cradled miniature of yourself asleep,
Stamp'd on the heart by never-erring love;
Liker than any Vandyke ever made,
A pattern to the unborn age of thee,
Over whose sweet beauty I have wept for joy
A thousand times, and now should weep for sorrow,
Did I not think that after we were dead
Our fortunes would spring high in him, and that
The cares we waste upon our heavy crown
Would make it light and glorious as a wreath
Of heaven's beams for his dear innocent brow.

KING.

Dear Henrietta!
* * * * *

SCENE III.

HAMPDEN, PYM, CROMWELL, *and the younger* VANE.

HAMPDEN.

England, farewell! thou, who hast been my cradle,
Shalt never be my dungeon or my grave!
I held what I inherited in thee,
As pawn for that inheritance of freedom
Which thou hast sold for thy despoiler's smile:—
How can I call thee England, or my country?
Does the wind hold?

VANE.

The vanes sit steady
Upon the Abbey towers. The silver lightnings
Of the evening star, spite of the city's smoke,
Tell that the north wind reigns in the upper air.
Mark too that flock of fleecy-winged clouds
Sailing athwart St Margaret's.

HAMPDEN.

Hail, fleet herald
Of tempest! that wild pilot who shall guide
Hearts free as his, to realms as pure as thee,
Beyond the shot of tyranny! And thou,
Fair star, whose beam lies on the wide Atlantic,
Athwart its zones of tempest and of calm,
Bright as the path to a beloved home,
O light us to the isles of th' evening land!
Like floating Edens, cradled in the glimmer
Of sun-set, through the distant mist of years
Tinged by departing Hope, they gleam. Lone regions,
Where power's poor dupes and victims, yet have never
Propitiated the savage fear of kings
With purest blood of noblest hearts; whose dew
Is yet unstain'd with tears of those who wake
To weep each day the wrongs on which it dawns;
Whose sacred silent air owns yet no echo
Of formal blasphemies; nor impious rites
Wrest man's free worship from the God who loves,
Towards the worm who envies us his love;
Receive thou young [ ] of Paradise,
These exiles from the old and sinful world!
This glorious clime, this firmament whose lights
Dart mitigated influence through the veil
Of pale blue atmosphere; whose tears keep green

The pavement of this moist all-feeding earth;
This vaporous horizon, whose dim round
Is bastion'd by the circumfluous sea,
Repelling invasion from the sacred towers,
Presses upon me like a dungeon's grate,
A low dark roof, a damp and narrow vault:
The mighty universe becomes a cell
Too narrow for the soul that owns no master.
While the loathliest spot
Of this wide prison, England, is a nest
Of cradled peace built on the mountain tops,
To which the eagle-spirits of the free,
Which range through heaven and earth, and scorn the storm
Of time, and gaze upon the light of truth,
Return to brood over the [ ] thoughts
That cannot die, and may not be repelled.

* * * * *

FRAGMENTS FROM AN UNFINISHED DRAMA.

He came like a dream in the dawn of life,
He fled like a shadow before its noon;
He is gone, and my peace is turn'd to strife,
And I wander and wane like the weary moon.
O sweet Echo wake,
And for my sake
Make answer the while my heart shall break!

But heart has a music which Echo's lips,
Though tender and true, yet can answer not;
And the shadow that moves in the soul's eclipse
Can return not the kiss by his now forgot;
Sweet lips! he who hath
On my desolate path
Cast the darkness of absence worse than death!

INDIAN.

And if my grief should still be dearer to me
Than all the pleasure in the world beside,
Why would you lighten it?—

LADY.

I offer only
That which I seek, some human sympathy
In this mysterious island.

THE INDIAN.

Oh! my friend,
My sister, my beloved! What do I say?
My brain is dizzy and I scarce know whether
I speak to thee or her. Peace, perturbed heart!
I am to thee only as thou to mine,
The passing wind which heals the brow at noon,
And may strike cold into the breast at night,
Yet cannot linger where it soothes the most,
Or long soothe could it linger. But you said
You also loved.

LADY.

Loved! Oh, I love. Methinks
This word of love is fit for all the world,
And that for gentle hearts another name
Would speak of gentler thoughts than the world owns.
I have loved.

THE INDIAN.

And thou lovest not? if so
Young as thou art, thou canst afford to weep.

LADY.

Oh! would that I could claim exemption
From all the bitterness of that sweet name.
I loved, I love, and when I love no more,
Let joys and grief perish, and leave despair
To ring the knell of youth. He stood beside me,
The embodied vision of the brightest dream,
Which like a dawn heralds the day of life;
The shadow of his presence made my world
A paradise. All familiar things he touch'd,
All common words he spoke, became to me
Like forms and sounds of a diviner world.
He was as is the sun in his fierce youth,
As terrible and lovely as a tempest;
He came, and went, and left me what I am.
Alas! Why must I think how oft we two
Have sate together near the river springs,
Under the green pavilion which the willow
Spreads on the floor of the unbroken fountain,
Strewn by the nurslings that linger there,
Over that islet paved with flowers and moss,
While the musk-rose leaves, like flakes of crimson snow,
Shower'd on us, and the dove mourn'd in the pine,
Sad prophetess of sorrows not our own.

INDIAN.

Your breath is like soft music, your words are
The echoes of a voice which on my heart
Sleeps like a melody of early days.
But as you said—

LADY.

He was so awful, yet
So beautiful in mystery and terror,
Calming me as the loveliness of heaven
Soothes the unquiet sea:—and yet not so,
For he seem'd stormy, and would often seem
A quenchless sun mask'd in portentous clouds;
For such his thoughts, and even his actions were;
But he was not of them, nor they of him,
But as they hid his splendour from the earth.
Some said he was a man of blood and peril,
And steep'd in bitter infamy to the lips.
More need was there I should be innocent,
More need that I should be most true and kind,
And much more need that there should be found one
To share remorse, and scorn and solitude,
And all the ills that wait on those who do
The tasks of ruin in the world of life.
He fled, and I have follow'd him.

February, 1822.

PRINCE ATHANASE,

A FRAGMENT.

PART I.

There was a youth, who, as with toil and travel,
Had grown quite weak and grey before his time;
Nor any could the restless griefs unravel

Which burn'd within him, withering up his prime,
And goading him, like fiends, from land to land.
Not his the load of any secret crime,

For nought of ill his heart could understand,
But pity and wild sorrow for the same;—
Not his the thirst for glory or command,

Baffled with blast of hope-consuming shame;
Nor evil joys which fire the vulgar breast,
And quench in speedy smoke its feeble flame,

Had left within his soul their dark unrest:
Nor what religion fables of the grave
Fear'd he,—Philosophy's accepted guest.

For none than he a purer heart could have,
Or that loved good more for itself alone;
Of nought in heaven or earth was he the slave.

What sorrow deep, and shadowy, and unknown,
Sent him, a hopeless wanderer, through mankind?—
If with a human sadness he did groan,

He had a gentle yet aspiring mind;
Just, innocent, with varied learning fed;
And such a glorious consolation find

In others' joy, when all their own is dead:
He loved, and labour'd for his kind in grief,
And yet, unlike all others, it is said,

That from such toil he never found relief:
Although a child of fortune and of power,
Of an ancestral name the orphan chief.

His soul had wedded wisdom, and her dower
Is love and justice, clothed in which he sate
Apart from men, as in a lonely tower,

Pitying the tumult of their dark estate—
Yet even in youth did he not e'er abuse
The strength of wealth or thought, to consecrate

Those false opinions which the harsh rich use
To blind the world they famish for their pride;
Nor did he hold from any man his dues,

But like a steward in honest dealings tried,
With those who toil'd and wept, the poor and wise
His riches and his cares he did divide.

Fearless he was, and scorning all disguise,
What he dared do or think, though men might start,
He spoke with mild yet unaverted eyes;

Liberal he was of soul, and frank of heart,
And to his many friends—all loved him well—
Whate'er he knew or felt he would impart,

If words he found those inmost thoughts to tell;
If not, he smiled or wept; and his weak foes
He neither spurn'd nor hated: though with fell

And mortal hate their thousand voices rose,
They past like aimless arrows from his ear—
Nor did his heart or mind its portal close

To those, or them, or any whom life's sphere
May comprehend within its wide array.
What sadness made that vernal spirit sere?

He knew not. Though his life, day after day,
Was failing like an unreplenish'd stream,
Though in his eyes a cloud and burthen lay,

Through which his soul, like Vesper's serene beam
Piercing the chasms of ever rising clouds,
Shone, softly burning; though his lips did seem

Like reeds which quiver in impetuous floods;
And through his sleep, and o'er each waking hour,
Thoughts after thoughts, unresting multitudes,

Were driven within him, by some secret power,
Which bade them blaze, and live, and roll afar,
Like lights and sounds, from haunted tower to tower,

O'er castled mountains borne, when tempest's war
Is levied by the night-contending winds,
And the pale dalesmen watch with eager ear;—

Though such were in his spirit, as the fiends
Which wake and feed on ever-living woe,—
What was this grief, which ne'er in other minds

A mirror found,—he knew not—none could know;
But on whoe'er might question him he turn'd
The light of his frank eyes, as if to show

He knew not of the grief within that burn'd,
But asked forbearance with a mournful look;
Or spoke in words from which none ever learn'd

The cause of his disquietude; or shook
With spasms of silent passion; or turn'd pale:
So that his friends soon rarely undertook

To stir his secret pain without avail;—
For all who knew and loved him then perceived
That there was drawn an adamantine veil

Between his heart and mind,—both unrelieved
Wrought in his brain and bosom separate strife.
Some said that he was mad, others believed

That memories of an antenatal life
Made this, where now he dwelt, a penal hell;
And others said that such mysterious grief

From God's displeasure, like a darkness, fell
On souls like his, which own'd no higher law
Than love; love calm, stedfast, invincible

By mortal fear or supernatural awe;
And others,—« 'T is the shadow of a dream
Which the veil'd eye of memory never saw,

« But through the soul's abyss, like some dark stream
Through shatter'd mines and caverns underground
Rolls, shaking its foundations; and no beam

« Of joy may rise, but it is quench'd and drown'd
In the dim whirlpools of this dream obscure.
Soon its exhausted waters will have found

« A lair of rest beneath thy spirit pure,
O Athanase!—in one so good and great,
Evil or tumult cannot long endure.»

So spake they: idly of another's state
Babbling vain words and fond philosophy;
This was their consolation; such debate

Men held with one another; nor did he,
Like one who labours with a human woe,
Decline this talk; as if its theme might be

Another, not himself, he to and fro
Question'd and canvass'd it with subtlest wit,
And none but those who loved him best could know

That which he knew not, how it gall'd and bit
His weary mind, this converse vain and cold;
For like an eyeless night-mare grief did sit

Upon his being; a snake which fold by fold
Press'd out the life of life, a clinging fiend
Which clench'd him if he stirr'd with deadlier hold;
And so his grief remain'd—let it remain—untold.[1]

PART II.

FRAGMENT I.

Prince Athanase had one beloved friend,
An old, old man, with hair of silver white,
And lips where heavenly smiles would hang and blend

With his wise words; and eyes whose arrowy light
Shone like the reflex of a thousand minds.
He was the last whom superstition's blight

Had spared in Greece—the blight that cramps and blinds,—
And in his olive bower at OEnoe
Had sate from earliest youth. Like one who finds

A fertile island in the barren sea,
One mariner who has survived his mates
Many a drear month in a great ship—so he,

With soul-sustaining songs, and sweet debates
Of ancient lore, there fed his lonely being:—
"The mind becomes that which it contemplates,"—

And thus Zonoras, by forever seeing
Their bright creations, grew like wisest men;
And when he heard the crash of nations fleeing

A bloodier power than ruled thy ruins then,
O sacred Hellas! many weary years
He wander'd till the path of Laian's glen

Was grass-grown—and the unremember'd tears
Were dry in Laian for their honour'd chief,
Who fell in Byzant, pierced by Moslem spears:—

And as the lady look'd with faithful grief
From her high lattice o'er the rugged path,
Where she once saw that horseman toil, with brief

And blighting hope, who with the news of death
Struck body and soul as with a mortal blight,
She saw beneath the chesnuts, far beneath,

An old man toiling up, a weary wight;
And soon within her hospitable hall
She saw his white hairs glittering in the light

Of the wood fire, and round his shoulders fall;
And his wan visage and his wither'd mien
Yet calm and [ ] and majestical.

And Athanase, her child, who must have been
Then three years old, sate opposite and gazed.

FRAGMENT II.

Such was Zonoras; and as daylight finds
An amaranth glittering on the path of frost,
When autumn nights have nipt all weaker kinds,

Thus had his age, dark, cold, and tempest-tost,
Shone truth upon Zonoras; and he fill'd
From fountains pure, nigh overgrown and lost,

The spirit of Prince Athanase, a child,
With soul-sustaining songs of ancient lore
And philosophic wisdom, clear and mild.

And sweet and subtle talk they evermore,
The pupil and master shared; until,
Sharing the undiminishable store,

The youth, as shadows on a grassy hill
Outrun the winds that chase them, soon outran
His teacher, and did teach with native skill

Strange truths and new to that experienced man;
Still they were friends, as few have ever been
Who mark the extremes of life's discordant span.

And in the caverns of the forest green,
Or by the rocks of echoing ocean hoar,
Zonoras and Prince Athanase were seen

By summer woodmen; and when winter's roar
Sounded o'er earth and sea its blast of war,
The Balearic fisher, driven from shore,

Hanging upon the peaked wave afar,
Then saw their lamp from Laian's turret gleam,
Piercing the stormy darkness like a star,

Which pours beyond the sea one stedfast beam,
Whilst all the constellations of the sky
Seem'd wrecked. They did but seem—

For, lo! the wintry clouds are all gone by,
And bright Arcturus through yon pines is glowing,
And far o'er southern waves, immoveably

Belted Orion hangs—warm light is flowing
From the young moon into the sunset's chasm.—
"O, summer night! with power divine, bestowing

"On thine own bird the sweet enthusiasm
Which overflows in notes of liquid gladness,
Filling the sky like light! How many a spasm

[1] The Author was pursuing a fuller development of the ideal character of Athanase, when it struck him that in an attempt at extreme refinement and analysis, his conceptions might be betrayed into the assuming a morbid character. The reader will judge whether he is a loser or gainer by this difference.—*Author's Note.*

« Of fever'd brains, oppress'd with grief and madness,
Were lull'd by thee, delightful nightingale!
And these soft waves, murmuring a gentle sadness,

« And the far sighings of yon piny dale
Made vocal by some wind, we feel not here,—
I bear alone what nothing may avail

« To lighten—a strange load!»—No human ear
Heard this lament; but o'er the visage wan
Of Athanase, a ruffling atmosphere

Of dark emotion, a swift shadow ran,
Like wind upon some forest-bosom'd lake,
Glassy and dark.—And that divine old man

Beheld his mystic friend's whole being shake,
Even where its inmost depths were gloomiest—
And with a calm and measured voice he spake,

And with a soft and equal pressure, prest
That cold lean hand :—« Dost thou remember yet
When the curved moon, then lingering in the west,

« Paused in yon waves her mighty horns to wet,
How in those beams we walk'd, half resting on the sea?
'T is just one year—sure thou dost not forget—

« Then Plato's words of light in thee and me
Linger'd like moonlight in the moonless east,
For we had just then read—thy memory

« Is faithful now—the story of the feast;
And Agathon and Diotima seem'd
From death and [ ] released.

FRAGMENT III.

'T was at the season when the Earth upsprings
From slumber, as a sphered angel's child,
Shadowing its eyes with green and golden wings,

Stands up before its mother bright and mild,
Of whose soft voice the air expectant seems—
So stood before the sun, which shone and smiled

To see it rise thus joyous from its dreams,
The fresh and radiant Earth. The hoary grove
Wax'd green—and flowers burst forth like starry beams;—

The grass in the warm sun did start and move,
And sea-buds burst under the waves serene :—
How many a one, though none be near to love,

Loves then the shade of his own soul, half seen
In any mirror—or the spring's young minions,
The winged leaves amid the copses green;—

How many a spirit then puts on the pinions
Of fancy, and outstrips the lagging blast,
And his own steps—and over wide dominions

Sweeps in his dream-drawn chariot, far and fast,
More fleet than storms—the wide world shrinks below
When winter and despondency are past.

'T was at this season that Prince Athanase
Past the white Alps—those eagle-baffling mountains
Slept in their shrouds of snow;—beside the ways

The waterfalls were voiceless—for their fountains
Were changed to mines of sunless crystal now,
Or by the curdling winds—like brazen wings

Which clang'd alone the mountain's marble brow,
Warp'd into adamantine fretwork, hung
And fill'd with frozen light the chasm below.

FRAGMENT IV.

Thou art the wine whose drunkenness is all
We can desire, O Love! and happy souls,
Ere from thy vine the leaves of autumn fall,

Catch thee, and feed from their o'erflowing bowls
Thousands who thirst for thy ambrosial dew;—
Thou art the radiance which where ocean rolls

Invests it; and when heavens are blue
Thou fillest them; and when the earth is fair,
The shadow of thy moving wings imbue

Its deserts and its mountains, till they wear
Beauty like some bright robe;—thou ever soarest
Among the towers of men, and as soft air

In spring, which moves the unawaken'd forest,
Clothing with leaves its branches bare and bleak,
Thou floatest among men; and aye implorest

That which from thee they should implore:—the weak
Alone kneel to thee, offering up the hearts
The strong have broken—yet where shall any seek

A garment whom thou clothest not?

Marlow, 1817.

MAZENGHI.[1]

Oh! foster-nurse of man's abandon'd glory,
Since Athens, its great mother, sunk in splendour;
Thou shadowest forth that mighty shape in story,
As ocean its wreck'd fanes, severe yet tender:
The light-invested angel Poesy
Was drawn from the dim world to welcome thee.

And thou in painting didst transcribe all taught
By loftiest meditations; marble knew
The sculptor's fearless soul—and as he wrought,
The grace of his own power and freedom grew.
And more than all, heroic, just, sublime
Thou wert among the false—was this thy crime?

Yes; and on Pisa's marble walls the twine
Of direst weeds hangs garlanded—the snake
Inhabits its wreck'd palaces;—in thine
A beast of subtler venom now doth make
Its lair, and sits amid their glories overthrown,
And thus thy victim's fate is as thine own.

[1] This fragment refers to an event, told in Sismondi's Histoire des Républiques Italiennes, which occurred during the war when Florence finally subdued Pisa, and reduced it to a province. The opening stanzas are addressed to the conquering city.

The sweetest flowers are ever frail and rare,
And love and freedom blossom but to wither;
And good and ill like vines entangled are,
So that their grapes may oft be pluck'd together;—
Divide the vintage ere thou drink, then make
Thy heart rejoice for dead Mazenghi's sake.

No record of his crime remains in story,
But if the morning bright as evening shone,
It was some high and holy deed, by glory
Pursued into forgetfulness, which won
From the blind crowd he made secure and free
The patriot's meed, toil, death, and infamy.

For when by sound of trumpet was declared
A price upon his life, and there was set
A penalty of blood on all who shared
So much of water with him as might wet
His lips, which speech divided not—he went
Alone, as you may guess, to banishment.

Amid the mountains, like a hunted beast,
He hid himself, and hunger, cold, and toil,
Month after month endured; it was a feast
Whene'er he found those globes of deep red gold
Which in the woods the strawberry-tree doth bear,
Suspended in their emerald atmosphere.

And in the roofless huts of vast morasses,
Deserted by the fever-stricken serf,
All overgrown with reeds and long rank grasses,
And hillocks heap'd of moss-inwoven turf,
And where the huge and speckled aloe made,
Rooted in stones, a broad and pointed shade,

He housed himself. There is a point of strand
Near Vada's tower and town; and on one side
The treacherous marsh divides it from the land,
Shadow'd by pine and ilex forests wide,
And on the other creeps eternally,
Through muddy weeds, the shallow, sullen sea.

Naples, 1818.

THE WOODMAN AND THE NIGHTINGALE.

A WOODMAN whose rough heart was out of tune
(I think such hearts yet never came to good)
Hated to hear, under the stars or moon

One nightingale in an interfluous wood
Satiate the hungry dark with melody;—
And as a vale is water'd by a flood,

Or as the moonlight fills the open sky
Struggling with darkness—as a tuberose
Peoples some Indian dell with scents which lie

Like clouds above the flower from which they rose,
The singing of that happy nightingale
In this sweet forest, from the golden close

Of evening, till the star of dawn may fail,
Was interfused upon the silentness;
The folded roses and the violets pale

Heard her within their slumbers, the abyss
Of heaven with all its planets; the dull ear
Of the night-cradled earth; the loneliness
Of the circumfluous waters,—every sphere
And every flower and beam and cloud and wave,
And every wind of the mute atmosphere,

And every beast stretch'd in its rugged cave,
And every bird lull'd on its mossy bough,
And every silver moth fresh from the grave,

Which is its cradle—ever from below
Aspiring like one who loves too fair, too far,
To be consumed within the purest glow

Of one serene and unapproached star,
As if it were a lamp of earthly light,
Unconscious, as some human lovers are,

Itself how low, how high beyond all height
The heaven where it would perish!—and every form
That worshipp'd in the temple of the night

Was awed into delight, and by the charm
Girt as with an interminable zone,
Whilst that sweet bird, whose music was a storm

Of sound, shook forth the dull oblivion
Out of their dreams; harmony became love
In every soul but one—

And so this man return'd with axe and saw
At evening close from killing the tall treen,
The soul of whom by nature's gentle law

Was each a wood-nymph, and kept ever green
The pavement and the roof of the wild copse,
Chequering the sunlight of the blue serene

With jagged leaves, and from the forest tops
Singing the winds to sleep—or weeping oft
Fast showers of aerial water-drops

Into their mother's bosom, sweet and soft,
Nature's pure tears which have no bitterness;—
Around the cradles of the birds aloft

They spread themselves into the loveliness
Of fan-like leaves, and over pallid flowers
Hang like moist clouds:—or, where high branches kiss,

Make a green space among the silent bowers,
Like a vast fane in a metropolis,
Surrounded by the columns and the towers

All overwrought with branch-like traceries
In which there is religion—and the mute
Persuasion of unkindled melodies,

Odours and gleams and murmurs, which the lute
Of the blind pilot-spirit of the blast
Stirs as it sails, now grave and now acute,

Wakening the leaves and waves ere it has past
To such brief unison as on the brain
One tone, which never can recur, has cast,

One accent never to return again.

TO THE MOON.

Art thou pale for weariness
Of climbing heaven, and gazing on the earth,
Wandering companionless
Among the stars that have a different birth,—
And ever changing, like a joyless eye
That finds no object worth its constancy?

SONG FOR TASSO.

I loved—alas! our life is love;
But when we cease to breathe and move
I do suppose love ceases too.
I thought, but not as now I do,
Keen thoughts and bright of linked lore,
Of all that men had thought before,
And all that nature shows, and more.

And still I love and still I think,
But strangely, for my heart can drink
The dregs of such despair, and live,
And love; [ ]
And if I think, my thoughts come fast,
I mix the present with the past,
And each seems uglier than the last.

Sometimes I see before me flee
A silver spirit's form, like thee,
O Leonora, and I sit
[ ] still watching it,
Till by the grated casement's ledge
It fades, with such a sigh, as sedge
Breathes o'er the breezy streamlet's edge.

EPITAPH.

These are two friends whose lives were undivided,
So let their memory be, now they have glided
Under the grave; let not their bones be parted,
For their two hearts in life were single-hearted.

THE WANING MOON.

And like a dying lady, lean and pale,
Who totters forth, wrapt in a gauzy veil,
Out of her chamber, led by the insane
And feeble wanderings of her fading brain,
The moon arose up in the murky earth,
A white and shapeless mass.

THE END.

THE

POETICAL WORKS

OF

JOHN KEATS.

THE

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OF

JOHN KEATS

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Sommaire

Memoir of John Keats.

The short career of John Keats was marked by the development of powers which have been rarely exhibited in one at so immatured an age. He had but just completed his twenty-fourth year when he was snatched away from the world, and an end put for ever to a genius of a lofty and novel order. Certain party critics, who made it their object to lacerate the feelings, and endeavour to put down by vituperation and misplaced ridicule every effort which emanated not from their own servile dependents or followers, furiously attacked the writings of Keats on their appearance. Their promise of greater excellence was unquestionable, their beauties were obvious,—but so also were defects, which might easily be made available for an attack upon the author; and which certain writers of the Quarterly Review instantly seized upon to gratify party malice,—not against the author so much as against his friends. The unmerited abuse poured upon Keats by this periodical work is supposed to have hastened his end, which was slowly approaching when the criticism before-mentioned appeared.

This original and singular example of poetical genius was of humble descent, and was born in Moorfields, London, October 29, 1796, at a livery-stables which had belonged to his grandfather. He received a classical education at Enfield, under a Mr Clarke, and was apprenticed to Mr Hammond, a surgeon at Edmonton. The son of his schoolmaster Clarke encouraged the first germs of the poetical faculty which he early observed in the young poet, and introduced him to Mr Leigh Hunt, who is reported to have been the means of his introduction to the public. Keats was an individual of extreme sensitiveness, so that he would betray emotion even to tears on hearing a noble action recited, or at the mention of a glowing thought or one of deep pathos: yet both his moral and personal courage were above all suspicion. His health was always delicate, for he had been a seven months' child; and it appears that the symptoms of premature decay, or rather of fragile vitality, were long indicated by his organization, before consumption decidedly displayed itself.

The juvenile productions of Keats were published in 1817, the author being at that time in his twenty-first year. His favourite sojourn appears to have been Hampstead, the localities of which village were the scenes of his earliest abstractions, and the prompters of many of his best poetical productions: most of his personal friends, too, resided in the neighbourhood. His first published volume, though the greater part of it was not above mediocrity, contained passages and lines of rare beauty. His political sentiments differing from those of the Quarterly Review, being manly and independent, were sins never to be forgiven; and as in that party work literary judgment was always dealt out according to political congeniality of feeling, with the known servility of its writers, an author like Keats had no chance of being judged fairly. He was friendless and unknown, and could not even attract notice to a just complaint if he appealed to the public, from his being yet obscure as an author. This Gifford, the editor of the Quarterly, well knew, and poured his malignity upon his unoffending victim in proportion as he was conscious of the want of power in the object of his attack to resist it. A scion of nobility might have scribbled nonsense and been certain of applause; but a singular genius springing up by its own vitality in an obscure corner, was by all means to be crushed.—Gifford had been a cobbler, and the son of the livery-stable-keeper was not worthy of his critical toleration! Thus it always is with those narrow-minded persons who rise by the force of accident from vulgar obscurity: they cannot tolerate a brother, much less superior power or genius in that brother. On the publication of Keats's next work, «Endymion,» Gifford attacked it with all the bitterness of which his pen was capable, and did not hesitate, before he saw the work, to announce his intention of doing so to the publisher. Keats had endeavoured, as much as was consistent with independent feeling, to conciliate the critics at large, as may be observed in his preface to that poem. He merited to be treated with indulgence, not wounded by the envenomed shafts of political animosity for literary errors. His book abounded in passages of true poetry, which were of course passed over; and it is difficult to decide whether the cowardice or the cruelty of the attack upon it, most deserve execration. Of great sensitiveness, as already observed, and his frame already touched by a

mortal distemper, he felt his hopes withered, and his attempts to obtain honourable public notice in his own scantily allotted days frustrated. He was never to see his honourable fame: this preyed upon his spirit and hastened his end, as has been already noticed. The third and last of his works was the little volume (his best work) containing « Lamia, » « Isabella, » « The Eve of St Agnes, » and « Hyperion. »—That he was not a finished writer, must be conceded; that, like Kœrner in Germany, he gave rich promise rather than matured fruit, may be granted; but they must indeed be ill judges of genius who are not delighted with what he left, and do not see that, had he lived, he might have worn a wreath of renown which time would not easily have withered. His was indeed an « untoward fate, » as Byron observes of him in the eleventh canto of « Don Juan. »

For several years before his death, Keats had felt that the disease which preyed upon him was mortal,—that the agents of decay were at work upon a body too imperfectly organized, or too feebly constructed to sustain long the fire of existence. He had neglected his own health to attend a brother on his death-bed, when it would have been far more prudent that he had recollected it was necessary he should take care of himself. Under the bereavement of this brother he was combating his keen feelings, when the Zoilus of the *Quarterly* so ferociously attacked him. The excitement of spirit was too much for his frame to sustain; and a blow from another quarter, coming about the same time, shook him so much, that he told a friend with tears « his heart was breaking. »—He was now persuaded to try the climate of Italy, the refuge of those who have no more to hope for in their own; but which is commonly delayed until the removal only leads the traveller to the tomb. Thither he went to die. He was accompanied by Mr Severn, an artist of considerable talent, well known since in Rome. Mr Severn was a valuable and attached friend of the poet; and they went first to Naples, and thence journeyed to Rome,—where Keats closed his eyes on the world on the 24th of February, 1821. He wished ardently for death before it came. The springs of vitality were left nearly dry long before; his lingering as he did astonished his medical attendants. His sufferings were great, but he was all resignation. He said, not long before he died, that he « felt the flowers growing over him. »

On the examination of his body, *post mortem*, by his physicians, they found that life rarely so long tenanted a body shattered as his was: his lungs were well-nigh annihilated.—His remains were deposited in the cemetery of the Protestants at Rome, at the foot of the pyramid of Caius Cestius, near the Porta San Paolo, where a white marble tombstone, bearing the following inscription, surmounted by a lyre in *basso relievo*, has been erected to his memory:—

This Grave
contains all that was mortal
of a
YOUNG ENGLISH POET,
who,
on his death-bed,
in the bitterness of his heart
at the malicious power of his enemies,
desired
these words to be engraved on his tombstone—
HERE LIES ONE
WHOSE NAME WAS WRIT IN WATER.
Feb. 24th, 1821.

The physiognomy of the young poet indicated his character. Sensibility was predominant, but there was no deficiency of power. His features were well-defined, and delicately susceptible of every impression. His eyes were large and dark, but his cheeks were sunk, and his face pale when he was tranquil. His hair was of a brown colour, and curled naturally. His head was small, and set upon broad high shoulders, and a body disproportionately large to his lower limbs, which, however, were well-made. His stature was low; and his hands, says a friend (Mr L. Hunt), were faded, having prominent veins—which he would look upon, and pronounce to belong to one who had seen fifty years. His temper was of the gentlest description, and he felt deeply all favours conferred upon him: in fact, he was one of those marked and rare characters which genius stamps from their birth in her own mould; and whose early consignment to the tomb has, it is most probable, deprived the world of works calculated to delight, if not to astonish mankind—of productions to which every congenial spirit and kind quality of the human heart would have done homage, and confessed the power. It is to be lamented that such promise should have been so prematurely blighted.

Scattered through the writings of Keats will be found passages which come home to every bosom alive to each nobler and kindlier feeling of the human heart. There is much in them to be corrected, much to be altered for the better; but there are sparkling gems of the first lustre everywhere to be found. It is strange, that in civilized societies writings should be judged of, not by their merits, but by the faction to which their author belongs, though their productions may be solely confined to subjects the most remote from controversy. In England, a party-man must yield up every thing to the opinions and dogmatism of his caste. He must reject truths,

pervert reason, misrepresent all things coming from an opponent of another creed in religion or politics. Such a state of virulent and lamentable narrow-mindedness, is the most certain that can exist for blighting the tender blossoms of genius, and blasting the innocent and virtuous hopes of the young aspirant after honest fame. It is not necessary that a young and ardent mind avow principles hostile to those who set up for its enemies—if he be but the friend of a friend openly opposed to them, it is enough; and the worst is, that the hostility displayed is neither limited by truth and candour, sound principles of criticism, humanity, or honourable feeling: it fights with all weapons, in the dark or in the light, by craft, or in any mode to obtain its bitter objects. The critics who hastened the end of Keats, had his works been set before them as being those of an unknown writer, would have acknowledged their talent, and applauded where it was due, for their attacks upon him were not made from lack of judgment, but from wilful hostility. One knows not how to characterise such demoniacal insincerity. Keats belonged to a school of politics which they from their ambush anathematized:—hence, and hence alone, their malice towards him.

Keats was, as a poet, like a rich fruit-tree which the gardener has not pruned of its luxuriance: time, had it been allotted him by Heaven, would have seen it as trim and rich as any brother of the garden. It is and will ever be regretted by the readers of his works, that he lingered no longer among living men, to bring to perfection what he meditated, to contribute to British literature a greater name, and to delight the lovers of true poetry with the rich melody of his musically embodied thoughts.

THE

POETICAL WORKS

OF

JOHN KEATS.

Endymion;

A POETIC ROMANCE.

Inscribed to the Memory of Thomas Chatterton.

The stretched metre of an Antique Song.

PREFACE.

KNOWING within myself the manner in which this Poem has been produced, it is not without a feeling of regret that I make it public.

What manner I mean, will be quite clear to the reader, who must soon perceive great inexperience, immaturity, and every error denoting a feverish attempt, rather than a deed accomplished. The two first books, and indeed the two last, I feel sensible are not of such completion as to warrant their passing the press; nor should they if I thought a year's castigation would do them any good;—it will not: the foundations are too sandy. It is just that this youngster should die away: a sad thought for me, if I had not some hope that while it is dwindling I may be plotting, and fitting myself for verses fit to live.

This may be speaking too presumptuously, and may deserve a punishment: but no feeling man will be forward to inflict it: he will leave me alone, with the conviction that there is not a fiercer hell than the failure in a great object. This is not written with the least atom of purpose to forestall criticisms of course, but from the desire I have to conciliate men who are competent to look, and who do look with a zealous eye, to the honour of English literature.

The imagination of a boy is healthy, and the mature imagination of a man is healthy; but there is a space of life between, in which the soul is in a ferment, the character undecided, the way of life uncertain, the ambition thick-sighted: thence proceeds mawkishness, and all the thousand bitters which those men I speak of must necessarily taste in going over the following pages.

I hope I have not in too late a day touched the beautiful mythology of Greece, and dulled its brightness: for I wish to try once more, before I bid it farewell.

TEIGNMOUTH, *April* 10. 1818.

ENDYMION.

BOOK I.

A THING of beauty is a joy for ever:
Its loveliness increases; it will never
Pass into nothingness; but still will keep
A bower quiet for us, and a sleep
Full of sweet dreams, and health, and quiet breathing.
Therefore, on every morrow, are we wreathing
A flowery band to bind us to the earth,
Spite of despondence, of th' inhuman dearth
Of noble natures, of the gloomy days,
Of all the unhealthy and o'er-darken'd ways
Made for our searching: yes, in spite of all,
Some shape of beauty moves away the pall
From our dark spirits. Such the sun, the moon,
Trees old and young, sprouting a shady boon
For simple sheep; and such are daffodils
With the green world they live in; and clear rills
That for themselves a cooling covert make
'Gainst the hot season; the mid-forest brake,
Rich with a sprinkling of fair musk-rose blooms:
And such too is the grandeur of the dooms
We have imagin'd for the mighty dead;
All lovely tales that we have heard or read:
An endless fountain of immortal drink,
Pouring unto us from the heaven's brink.

Nor do we merely feel these essences
For one short hour; no, even as the trees
That whisper round a temple become soon
Dear as the temple's self, so does the moon,
The passion poesy, glories infinite,
Haunt us till they become a cheering light
Unto our souls, and bound to us so fast,
That, whether there be shine, or gloom o'ercast,
They alway must be with us, or we die.

Therefore, 't is with full happiness that I
Will trace the story of Endymion.
The very music of the name has gone
Into my being, and each pleasant scene
Is growing fresh before me as the green
Of our own valleys: so I will begin
Now while I cannot hear the city's din;
Now while the early budders are just new,
And run in mazes of the youngest hue
About old forests; while the willow trails
Its delicate amber; and the dairy pails
Bring home increase of milk. And, as the year
Grows lush in juicy stalks, I 'll smoothly steer
My little boat, for many quiet hours,
With streams that deepen freshly into bowers.
Many and many a verse I hope to write,
Before the daisies, vermeil rimm'd and white,
Hide in deep herbage; and ere yet the bees
Hum about globes of clover and sweet peas,
I must be near the middle of my story.
O may no wintry season, bare and hoary,
See it half finish'd: but let Autumn bold,
With universal tinge of sober gold,
Be all about me when I make an end.
And now at once, adventuresome, I send
My herald thought into a wilderness:
There let its trumpet blow, and quickly dress
My uncertain path with green, that I may speed
Easily onward, thorough flowers and weed.

Upon the sides of Latmos was outspread
A mighty forest; for the moist earth fed
So plenteously all weed-hidden roots
Into o'erhanging boughs, and precious fruits.
And it had gloomy shades, sequester'd deep,
Where no man went; and if from shepherd's keep
A lamb stray'd far a-down those inmost glens,
Never again saw he the happy pens
Whither his brethren, bleating with content,
Over the hills at every night-fall went.
Among the shepherds 't was believed ever,
That not one fleecy lamb which thus did sever
From the white flock, but pass'd unworried
By any wolf, or pard with prying head,
Until it came to some unfooted plains
Where fed the herds of Pan: ay, great his gains
Who thus one lamb did lose. Paths there were many,
Winding through palmy fern, and rushes fenny,
And ivy banks; all leading pleasantly
To a wide lawn, whence one could only see
Stems thronging all around between the swell
Of turf and slanting branches: who could tell
The freshness of the space of heaven above,
Edged round with dark tree tops? through which a dove
Would often beat its wings, and often too
A little cloud would move across the blue.

Full in the middle of this pleasantness
There stood a marble altar, with a tress
Of flowers budded newly; and the dew
Had taken fairy phantasies to strew
Daisies upon the sacred sward last eve,
And so the dawned light in pomp receive.
For 't was the morn: Apollo's upward fire
Made every eastern cloud a silvery pyre
Of brightness so unsullied, that therein
A melancholy spirit well might win
Oblivion, and melt out his essence fine
Into the winds: rain-scented eglantine
Gave temperate sweets to that well-wooing sun;
The lark was lost in him; cold springs had run
To warm their chilliest bubbles in the grass;
Man's voice was on the mountains; and the mass
Of nature's lives and wonders pulsed tenfold,
To feel this sun-rise and its glories old.

Now while the silent workings of the dawn
Were busiest, into that self-same lawn
All suddenly, with joyful cries, there sped
A troop of little children garlanded;
Who gathering round the altar, seem'd to pry
Earnestly round as wishing to espy
Some folk of holiday: nor had they waited
For many moments, ere their ears were sated
With a faint breath of music, which ev'n then
Fill'd out its voice, and died away again.
Within a little space again it gave
Its airy swellings, with a gentle wave,
To light-hung leaves, in smoothest echoes breaking
Through copse-clad valleys,—ere their death, o'ertaking
The surgy murmurs of the lonely sea.

And now, as deep into the wood as we
Might mark a lynx's eye, there glimmer'd light
Fair faces and a rush of garments white,
Plainer and plainer showing, till at last
Into the widest alley they all past,
Making directly for the woodland altar.
O kindly muse! let not my weak tongue falter
In telling of this goodly company,
Of their old piety, and of their glee:
But let a portion of ethereal dew
Fall on my head, and presently unmew
My soul; that I may dare, in wayfaring,
To stammer where old Chaucer used to sing.

Leading the way, young damsels danced along,
Bearing the burden of a shepherd's song;
Each having a white wicker over-brimm'd
With April's tender younglings: next, well trimm'd,
A crowd of shepherds with as sunburnt looks
As may be read of in Arcadian books;
Such as sat listening round Apollo's pipe,
When the great deity, for earth too ripe,
Let his divinity o'erflowing die
In music, through the vales of Thessaly:
Some idly trail'd their sheep-hooks on the ground,
And some kept up a shrilly mellow sound
With ebon-tipped flutes: close after these,
Now coming from beneath the forest trees,
A venerable priest full soberly,
Begirt with ministring looks: alway his eye
Stedfast upon the matted turf he kept,
And after him his sacred vestments swept.
From his right hand there swung a vase, milk-white,
Of mingled wine, out-sparkling generous light;
And in his left he held a basket full
Of all sweet herbs that searching eye could cull:
Wild thyme, and valley-lilies whiter still
Than Leda's love, and cresses from the rill.

His aged head, crowned with beechen wreath,
Seem'd like a poll of ivy in the teeth
Of winter hoar. Then came another crowd
Of shepherds, lifting in due time aloud
Their share of the ditty. After them appear'd,
Up-follow'd by a multitude that rear'd
Their voices to the clouds, a fair wrought car
Easily rolling so as scarce to mar
The freedom of three steeds of dapple brown,
Who stood therein did seem of great renown
Among the throng. His youth was fully blown,
Showing like Ganymede to manhood grown;
And, for those simple times, his garments were
A chieftain king's: beneath his breast, half bare,
Was hung a silver bugle, and between
His nervy knees there lay a boar-spear keen.
A smile was on his countenance; he seem'd,
To common lookers on, like one who dream'd
Of idleness in groves Elysian:
But there were some who feelingly could scan
A lurking trouble in his nether lip,
And see that oftentimes the reins would slip
Through his forgotten hands: then would they sigh,
And think of yellow leaves, of owlets' cry,
Of logs piled solemnly.—Ah, well-a-day,
Why should our young Endymion pine away!

Soon the assembly, in a circle ranged,
Stood silent round the shrine: each look was changed
To sudden veneration: women meek
Beckon'd their sons to silence; while each cheek
Of virgin bloom paled gently for slight fear.
Endymion too, without a forest peer,
Stood, wan, and pale, and with an awed face,
Among his brothers of the mountain chase.
In midst of all, the venerable priest
Eyed them with joy from greatest to the least,
And, after lifting up his aged hands,
Thus spake he: « Men of Latmos! shepherd bands!
Whose care it is to guard a thousand flocks:
Whether descended from beneath the rocks
That overtop your mountains; whether come
From valleys where the pipe is never dumb;
Or from your swelling downs, where sweet air stirs
Blue hare-bells lightly, and where prickly furze
Buds lavish gold; or ye, whose precious charge
Nibble their fill at ocean's very marge,
Whose mellow reeds are touch'd with sounds forlorn
By the dim echoes of old Triton's horn:
Mothers and wives! who day by day prepare
The scrip, with needments, for the mountain air;
And all ye gentle girls who foster up
Udderless lambs, and in a little cup
Will put choice honey for a favour'd youth:
Yea, every one attend! for in good truth
Our vows are wanting to our great god Pan.
Are not our lowing heifers sleeker than
Night-swollen mushrooms? Are not our wide plains
Speckled with countless fleeces? Have not rains
Green'd over April's lap? No howling sad
Sickens our fearful ewes; and we have had
Great bounty from Endymion our lord.
The earth is glad: the merry lark has pour'd
His early song against yon breezy sky,
That spreads so clear o'er our solemnity.»

Thus ending, on the shrine he heap'd a spire
Of teeming sweets, enkindling sacred fire;
Anon he stain'd the thick and spongy sod
With wine, in honour of the shepherd-god.
Now while the earth was drinking it, and while
Bay leaves were crackling in the fragrant pile,
And gummy frankincense was sparkling bright
'Neath smothering parsley, and a hazy light
Spread greyly eastward, thus a chorus sang:

«O thou, whose mighty palace roof doth hang
From jagged trunks, and overshadoweth
Eternal whispers, glooms, the birth, life, death
Of unseen flowers in heavy peacefulness;
Who lovest to see the hamadryads dress
Their ruffled locks where meeting hazels darken;
And through whole solemn hours dost sit, and hearken
The dreary melody of bedded reeds—
In desolate places, where dank moisture breeds
The pipy hemlock to strange overgrowth,
Bethinking thee, how melancholy loth
Thou wast to lose fair Syrinx—do thou now,
By thy love's milky brow!
By all the trembling mazes that she ran,
Hear us, great Pan!

«O thou, for whose soul-soothing quiet, turtles
Passion their voices cooingly 'mong myrtles,
What time thou wanderest at eventide
Through sunny meadows, that outskirt the side
Of thine enmossed realms: O thou, to whom
Broad-leaved fig-trees even now foredoom
Their ripen'd fruitage; yellow-girted bees
Their golden honeycombs; our village leas
Their fairest blossom'd beans and poppied corn;
The chuckling linnet its five young unborn,
To sing for thee; low creeping strawberries
Their summer coolness; pent up butterflies
Their freckled wings; yea, the fresh budding year
All its completions—be quickly near,
By every wind that nods the mountain pine,
O forester divine!

«Thou, to whom every fawn and satyr flies
For willing service; whether to surprise
The squatted hare while in half sleeping fit;
Or upward ragged precipices flit
To save poor lambkins from the eagle's maw;
Or by mysterious enticement draw
Bewilder'd shepherds to their path again;
Or to tread breathless round the frothy main,
And gather up all fancifullest shells
For thee to tumble into Naiads' cells,
And, being hidden, laugh at their out-peeping;
Or to delight thee with fantastic leaping,
The while they pelt each other on the crown
With silvery oak-apples, and fir-cones brown—
By all the echoes that about thee ring,
Hear us, O satyr king!

«O Hearkener to the loud-clapping shears,
While ever and anon to his shorn peers
A ram goes bleating: Winder of the horn,
When snouted wild-boars routing tender corn
Anger our huntsman: Breather round our farms,
To keep off mildews, and all weather harms:

Strange minstrant of undescribed sounds,
That come a-swooning over hollow grounds,
And wither drearily on barren moors:
Dread opener of the mysterious doors
Leading to universal knowledge—see,
Great son of Dryope,
The many that are come to pay their vows
With leaves about their brows!

« Be still the unimaginable lodge
For solitary thinkings; such as dodge
Conception to the very bourne of heaven,
Then leave the naked brain: be still the leaven,
That spreading in this dull and clodded earth,
Gives it a touch ethereal—a new birth:
Be still a symbol of immensity;
A firmament reflected in a sea;
An element filling the space between;
An unknown—but no more: we humbly screen
With uplift hands our foreheads, lowly bending,
And giving out a shout most heaven-rending,
Conjure thee to receive our humble Pæan,
Upon thy Mount Lycean!»

Even while they brought the burden to a close,
A shout from the whole multitude arose,
That linger'd in the air like dying rolls
Of abrupt thunder, when Ionian shoals
Of dolphins bob their noses through the brine.
Meantime, on shady levels, mossy fine,
Young companies nimbly began dancing
To the swift treble pipe, and humming string.
Aye, those fair living forms swam heavenly
To tunes forgotten—out of memory:
Fair creatures! whose young childrens' children bred
Thermopylæ its heroes—not yet dead,
But in old marbles ever beautiful.
High genitors, unconscious did they cull
Time's sweet first-fruits—they danced to weariness,
And then in quiet circles did they press
The hillock turf, and caught the latter end
Of some strange history, potent to send
A young mind from its bodily tenement.
Or they might watch the quoit-pitchers, intent
On either side; pitying the sad death
Of Hyacinthus, when the cruel breath
Of Zephyr slew him,—Zephyr penitent,
Who now, ere Phœbus mounts the firmament,
Fondles the flower amid the sobbing rain.
The archers too, upon a wider plain,
Beside the feathery whizzing of the shaft,
And the dull twanging bowstring, and the raft
Branch down sweeping from a tall ash top,
Call'd up a thousand thoughts to envelope
Those who would watch. Perhaps, the trembling knee
And frantic gape of lonely Niobe,
Poor, lonely Niobe! when her lovely young
Were dead and gone, and her caressing tongue
Lay a lost thing upon her paly lip,
And very, very deadliness did nip
Her motherly cheeks. Aroused from this sad mood
By one, who at a distance loud halloo'd,
Uplifting his strong bow into the air,
Many might after brighter visions stare:
After the Argonauts, in blind amaze
Tossing about on Neptune's restless ways,
Until, from the horizon's vaulted side,
There shot a golden splendour far and wide,
Spangling those million poutings of the brine
With quivering ore: 't was even an awful shine
From the exaltation of Apollo's bow;
A heavenly beacon in their dreary woe.
Who thus were ripe for high contemplating,
Might turn their steps towards the sober ring
Where sat Endymion and the aged priest
'Mong shepherds gone in eld, whose looks increased
The silvery setting of their mortal star.
There they discoursed upon the fragile bar
That keeps us from our homes ethereal;
And what our duties there: to nightly call
Vesper, the beauty-crest of summer weather;
To summon all the downiest clouds together
For the sun's purple couch; to emulate
In ministring the potent rule of fate
With speed of fire-tail'd exhalations;
To tint her pallid cheek with bloom, who cons
Sweet poesy by moonlight: besides these,
A world of other unguess'd offices.
Anon they wander'd, by divine converse,
Into Elysium; vying to rehearse
Each one his own anticipated bliss.
One felt heart-certain that he could not miss
His quick gone love, among fair blossom'd boughs,
Where every zephyr-sigh pouts, and endows
Her lips with music for the welcoming.
Another wish'd, 'mid that eternal spring,
To meet his rosy child, with feathery sails,
Sweeping, eye-earnestly, through almond vales:
Who, suddenly, should stoop through the smooth wind,
And with the balmiest leaves his temples bind;
And, ever after, through those regions be
His messenger, his little Mercury.
Some were athirst in soul to see again
Their fellow huntsmen o'er the wide champaign
In times long past; to sit with them, and talk
Of all the chances in their earthly walk;
Comparing, joyfully, their plenteous stores
Of happiness, to when upon the moors,
Benighted, close they huddled from the cold,
And shared their famish'd scrips. Thus all out-told
Their fond imaginations,—saving him
Whose eyelids curtain'd up their jewels dim,
Endymion: yet hourly had he striven
To hide the cankering venom, that had riven
His fainting recollections. Now indeed
His senses had swoon'd off: he did not heed
The sudden silence, or the whispers low,
Or the old eyes dissolving at his woe,
Or anxious calls, or close of trembling palms,
Or maiden's sigh, that grief itself embalms:
But in the self-same fixed trance he kept,
Like one who on the earth had never stept.
Aye, even as dead-still as a marble man,
Frozen in that old tale Arabian.

Who whispers him so pantingly and close?
Peona, his sweet sister: of all those,
His friends, the dearest. Hushing signs she made,
And breathed a sister's sorrow to persuade
A yielding up, a cradling on her care.
Her eloquence did breathe away the curse:
She led him, like some midnight spirit nurse

Of happy changes in emphatic dreams,
Along a path between two little streams,—
Guarding his forehead, with her round elbow,
From low-grown branches, and his footsteps slow
From stumbling over stumps and hillocks small;
Until they came to where these streamlets fall,
With mingled bubblings and a gentle rush,
Into a river, clear, brimful, and flush
With crystal mocking of the trees and sky.
A little shallop, floating there hard by,
Pointed its beak over the fringed bank;
And soon it lightly dipt, and rose, and sank,
And dipt again, with the young couple's weight,—
Peona guiding, through the water straight,
Towards a bowery island opposite;
Which gaining presently, she steered light
Into a shady, fresh, and ripply cove,
Where nested was an arbour, overwove
By many a summer's silent fingering;
To whose cool bosom she was used to bring
Her playmates, with their needle broidery,
And minstrel memories of times gone by.

So she was gently glad to see him laid
Under her favourite bower's quiet shade,
On her own couch, new made of flower leaves,
Dried carefully on the cooler side of sheaves
When last the sun his autumn tresses shook,
And the tann'd harvesters rich armfuls took.
Soon was he quieted to slumbrous rest:
But, ere it crept upon him, he had prest
Peona's busy hand against his lips,
And still, a sleeping, held her finger-tips
In tender pressure. And as a willow keeps
A patient watch over the stream that creeps
Windingly by it, so the quiet maid
Held her in peace: so that a whispering blade
Of grass, a wailful gnat, a bee bustling
Down in the blue-bells, or a wren light rustling
Among sere leaves and twigs, might all be heard.

O magic sleep! O comfortable bird,
That broodest o'er the troubled sea of the mind
Till it is hush'd and smooth! O unconfined
Restraint! imprisoned liberty! great key
To golden palaces, strange minstrelsy,
Fountains grotesque, new trees, bespangled caves,
Echoing grottos, full of tumbling waves
And moonlight; aye, to all the mazy world
Of silvery enchantment!—who, upfurl'd
Beneath thy drowsy wing a triple hour,
But renovates and lives?—Thus, in the bower,
Endymion was calm'd to life again.
Opening his eyelids with a healthier brain,
He said: «I feel this thine endearing love
All through my bosom: thou art as a dove
Trembling its closed eyes and sleeked wings
About me; and the pearliest dew not brings
Such morning incense from the fields of May,
As do those brighter drops that twinkling stray
From those kind eyes,—the very home and haunt
Of sisterly affection. Can I want
Aught else, aught nearer heaven, than such tears?
Yet dry them up, in bidding hence all fears
That, any longer, I will pass my days
Alone and sad. No, I will once more raise
My voice upon the mountain-heights; once more
Make my horn parley from their foreheads hoar:
Again my trooping hounds their tongues shall loll
Around the breathed boar: again I 'll poll
The fair-grown yew-tree, for a chosen bow:
And, when the pleasant sun is getting low,
Again I 'll linger in a sloping mead
To hear the speckled thrushes, and see feed
Our idle sheep. So be thou cheered, sweet!
And, if thy lute is here, softly intreat
My soul to keep in its resolved course.»

Hereat Peona, in their silver source,
Shut her pure sorrow-drops with glad exclaim,
And took a lute, from which there pulsing came
A lively prelude, fashioning the way
In which her voice should wander. 'T was a lay
More subtle cadenced, more forest wild
Than Dryope's lone lulling of her child;
And nothing since has floated in the air
So mournful strange. Surely some influence rare
Went, spiritual, through the damsel's hand;
For still, with Delphic emphasis, she spann'd
The quick invisible strings, even though she saw
Endymion's spirit melt away and thaw
Before the deep intoxication.
But soon she came, with sudden burst, upon
Her self-possession—swung the lute aside,
And earnestly said: «Brother, 't is vain to hide
That thou dost know of things mysterious,
Immortal, starry; such alone could thus
Weigh down thy nature. Hast thou sinn'd in aught
Offensive to the heavenly powers? Caught
A Paphian dove upon a message sent?
Thy deathful bow against some deer-herd bent,
Sacred to Dian? Haply, thou hast seen
Her naked limbs among the alders green;
And that, alas! is death. No, I can trace
Something more high perplexing in thy face!»

Endymion look'd at her, and press'd her hand,
And said, «Art thou so pale, who wast so bland
And merry in our meadows? How is this?
Tell me thine ailment: tell me all amiss!—
Ah! thou hast been unhappy at the change
Wrought suddenly in me. What indeed more strange?
Or more complete to overwhelm surmise?
Ambition is no sluggard: 't is no prize,
That toiling years would put within my grasp,
That I have sigh'd for: with so deadly gasp
No man e'er panted for a mortal love.
So all have set my heavier grief above
These things which happen. Rightly have they done:
I, who still saw the horizontal sun
Heave his broad shoulder o'er the edge of the world,
Out-facing Lucifer, and then had hurl'd
My spear aloft, as signal for the chace—
I, who, for very sport of heart, would race
With my own steed from Araby; pluck down
A vulture from his towery perching; frown
A lion into growling, loth retire—
To lose, at once, all my toil-breeding fire,
And sink thus low! but I will ease my breast
Of secret grief, here in this bowery nest.

«This river does not see the naked sky,
Till it begins to progress silverly

Around the western border of the wood,
Whence, from a certain spot, its winding flood
Seems at the distance like a crescent moon:
And in that nook, the very pride of June,
Had I been used to pass my weary eves;
The rather for the sun unwilling leaves
So dear a picture of his sovereign power,
And I could witness his most kingly hour,
When he doth lighten up the golden reins,
And paces leisurely down amber plains
His snorting four. Now when his chariot last
Its beams against the zodiac-lion cast,
There blossom'd suddenly a magic bed
Of sacred ditamy, and poppies red:
At which I wondered greatly, knowing well
That but one night had wrought this flowery spell;
And, sitting down close by, began to muse
What it might mean. Perhaps, thought I, Morpheus,
In passing here, his owlet pinions shook;
Or, it may be, ere matron Night uptook
Her ebon urn, young Mercury, by stealth,
Had dipt his rod in it: such garland wealth
Came not by common growth. Thus on I thought,
Until my head was dizzy and distraught.
Moreover, through the dancing poppies stole
A breeze, most softly lulling to my soul;
And shaping visions all about my sight
Of colours, wings, and bursts of spangly light;
The which became more strange, and strange, and dim,
And then were gulf'd in a tumultuous swim:
And then I fell asleep. Ah, can I tell
The enchantment that afterwards befel?
Yet it was but a dream: yet such a dream
That never tongue, although it overteem
With mellow utteranee, like a eavern spring,
Could figure out and to conception bring
All I beheld and felt. Methought I lay
Watching the zenith, where the milky way
Among the stars in virgin splendour pours;
And travelling my eye, until the doors
Of heaven appear'd to open for my flight,
I became loth and fearful to alight
From such high soaring by a downward glance:
So kept me stedfast in that airy trance,
Spreading imaginary pinions wide.
When, presently, the stars began to glide,
And faint away, before my eager view:
At which I sigh'd that I could not pursue,
And dropt my vision to the horizon's verge;
And lo! from opening clouds, I saw emerge
The loveliest moon, that ever silver'd o'er
A shell for Neptune's goblet; she did soar
So passionately bright, my dazzled soul
Commingling with her argent spheres did roll
Through clear and cloudy, even when she went
At last into a dark and vapoury tent—
Whereat, methought, the lidless-eyed train
Of planets all were in the blue again.
To commune with those orbs, once more I raised
My sight right upward: but it was quite dazed
By a bright something, sailing down apace,
Making me quickly veil my eyes and face:
Again I look'd, and, O ye deities,
Who from Olympus watch our destinies!
Whence that completed form of all completeness?
Whence came that high perfection of all sweetness?
Speak, stubborn earth, and tell me where, O where
Hast thou a symbol of her golden hair?
Not oat-sheaves drooping in the western sun;
Not—thy soft hand, fair sister! let me shun
Such follying before thee—yet she had,
Indeed, locks bright enough to make me mad;
And they were simply gordian'd up and braided,
Leaving, in naked comeliness, unshaded,
Her pearl round ears, white neck, and orbed brow;
The which were blended in, I know not how,
With such a paradise of lips and eyes,
Blush-tinted cheeks, half smiles, and faintest sighs,
That, when I think thereon, my spirit clings
And plays about its fancy, till the stings
Of human neighbourhood envenom all.
Unto what awful power shall I call?
To what high fane?—Ah! see her hovering feet,
More bluely vein'd, more soft, more whitely sweet
Than those of sea-born Venus, when she rose
From out her cradle shell. The wind out-blows
Her scarf into a fluttering pavilion;
'T is blue, and over-spangled with a million
Of little eyes, as though thou wert to shed,
Over the darkest, lushest blue-bell bed,
Handfuls of daisies.»—«Endymion, how strange!
Dream within dream!»—«She took an airy range,
And then, towards me, like a very maid,
Came blushing, waning, willing, and afraid,
And press'd me by the hand: Ah! 't was too much;
Methought I fainted at the charmed touch,
Yet held my recollection, even as one
Who dives three fathoms where the waters run
Gurgling in beds of coral: for anon,
I felt upmounted in that region
Where falling stars dart their artillery forth,
And eagles struggle with the buffeting north
That balances the heavy meteor-stone;—
Felt too, I was not fearful, nor alone,
But lapp'd and lull'd along the dangerous sky.
Soon, as it seem'd, we left our journeying high,
And straightway into frightful eddies swoop'd;
Such as ay muster where grey time has scoop'd
Huge dens and caverns in a mountain's side:
There hollow sounds aroused me, and I sigh'd
To faint once more by looking on my bliss—
I was distracted; madly did I kiss
The wooing arms which held me, and did give
My eyes at once to death: but 't was to live,
To take in draughts of life from the gold fount
Of kind and passionate looks; to count, and count
The moments, by some greedy help that seem'd
A second self, that each might be redeem'd
And plunder'd of its load of blessedness.
Ah, desperate mortal! I ev'n dared to press
Her very cheek against my crowned lip,
And, at that moment, felt my body dip
Into a warmer air: a moment more,
Our feet were soft in flowers. There was store
Of newest joys upon that alp. Sometimes
A scent of violets, and blossoming limes,
Loiter'd around us; then of honey cells,
Made delicate from all white-flower bells;
And once, above the edges of our nest,
An arch face peep'd,—an Oread as I guess'd.

«Why did I dream that sleep o'er-power'd me
In midst of all this heaven? Why not see,

Far off, the shadows of his pinions dark,
And stare them from me? But no, like a spark
That needs must die, although its little beam
Reflects upon a diamond, my sweet dream
Fell into nothing—into stupid sleep.
And so it was, until a gentle creep,
A careful moving caught my waking ears,
And up I started: Ah! my sighs, my tears,
My clenched hands;—for lo! the poppies hung
Dew-dabbled on their stalks, the ouzel sung
A heavy ditty, and the sullen day
Had chidden herald Hesperus away,
With leaden looks: the solitary breeze
Bluster'd, and slept, and its wild self did teaze
With wayward melancholy; and I thought,
Mark me, Peona! that sometimes it brought
Faint fare-thee-wells, and sigh-shrilled adieus!—
Away I wander'd—all the pleasant hues
Of heaven and earth had faded: deepest shades
Were deepest dungeons; heaths and sunny glades
Were full of pestilent light; our taintless rills
Seem'd sooty, and o'er-spread with upturn'd gills
Of dying fish; the vermeil rose had blown
In frightful scarlet, and its thorns out-grown
Like spiked aloe. If an innocent bird
Before my heedless footsteps stirr'd, and stirr'd
In little journeys, I beheld in it
A disguised demon, missioned to knit
My soul with under darkness; to entice
My stumblings down some monstrous precipice:
Therefore I eager follow'd, and did curse
The disappointment. Time, that aged nurse,
Rock'd me to patience. Now, thank gentle heaven!
These things, with all their comfortings, are given
To my down-sunken hours, and with thee,
Sweet sister, help to stem the ebbing sea
Of weary life."

Thus ended he, and both
Sat silent: for the maid was very loth
To answer; feeling well that breathed words
Would all be lost, unheard, and vain as swords
Against the enchased crocodile, or leaps
Of grasshoppers against the sun. She weeps,
And wonders; struggles to devise some blame;
To put on such a look as would say, *Shame*
On this poor weakness! but, for all her strife,
She could as soon have crush'd away the life
From a sick dove. At length, to break the pause,
She said with trembling chance: "Is this the cause?
This all? Yet it is strange, and sad, alas!
That one who through this middle earth should pass
Most like a sojourning demi-god, and leave
His name upon the harp-string, should achieve
No higher bard than simple maidenhood,
Singing alone, and fearfully,—how the blood
Left his young cheek; and how he used to stray
He knew not where; and how he would say, *nay*,
If any said 't was love: and yet 't was love;
What could it be but love? How a ring-dove
Let fall a sprig of yew-tree in his path;
And how he died: and then, that love doth scathe,
The gentle heart, as northern blasts do roses;
And then the ballad of his sad life closes
With sighs, and an alas!—Endymion!
Be rather in the trumpet's mouth,—anon
Among the winds at large—that all may hearken!
Although, before the crystal heavens darken,
I watch and dote upon the silver lakes
Pictured in western cloudiness, that takes
The semblance of gold rocks and bright gold sands,
Islands, and creeks, and amber-fretted strands
With horses prancing o'er them, palaces
And towers of amethyst,—would I so tease
My pleasant days, because I could not mount
Into those regions? The Morphean fount
Of that fine element that visions, dreams,
And fitful whims of sleep are made of, streams
Into its airy channels with so subtle,
So thin a breathing, not the spider's shuttle,
Circled a million times within the space
Of a swallow's nest-door, could delay a trace,
A tinting of its quality: how light
Must dreams themselves be; seeing they're more slight
Than the mere nothing that engenders them!
Then wherefore sully the entrusted gem
Of high and noble life with thoughts so sick?
Why pierce high-fronted honour to the quick
For nothing but a dream?" Hereat the youth
Look'd up: a conflicting of shame and ruth
Was in his plaited brow: yet, his eyelids
Widen'd a little, as when Zephyr bids
A little breeze to creep between the fans
Of careless butterflies: amid his pains
He seem'd to taste a drop of manna-dew,
Full palatable; and a colour grew
Upon his cheek, while thus he lifeful spake.

"Peona! ever have I long'd to slake
My thirst for the world's praises: nothing base,
No merely slumberous phantasm, could unlace
The stubborn canvas for my voyage prepared—
Though now 't is tatter'd; leaving my bark bared
And sullenly drifting: yet my higher hope
Is of too wide, too rainbow-large a scope,
To fret at myriads of earthly wrecks.
Wherein lies happiness? In that which becks
Our ready minds to fellowship divine,
A fellowship with essence; till we shine,
Full alchemized, and free of space. Behold
The clear religion of heaven! Fold
A rose leaf round thy finger's taperness,
And soothe thy lips: hist! when the airy stress
Of music's kiss impregnates the free winds,
And with a sympathetic touch unbinds
Eolian magic from their lucid wombs:
Then old songs waken from enclouded tombs;
Old ditties sigh above their father's grave;
Ghosts of melodious prophecyings rave
Round every spot where trod Apollo's foot;
Bronze clarions awake, and faintly bruit,
Where long ago a giant battle was;
And, from the turf, a lullaby doth pass
In every place where infant Orpheus slept.
Feel we these things!—that moment have we stept
Into a sort of oneness, and our state
Is like a floating spirit's. But there are
Richer entanglements, enthralments far
More self-destroying, leading, by degrees,
To the chief intensity: the crown of these
Is made of love and friendship, and sits high
Upon the forehead of humanity.

All its more ponderous and bulky worth
Is friendship, whence there ever issues forth
A steady splendour; but at the tip-top,
There hangs by unseen film, an orbed drop
Of light, and that is love: its influence
Thrown in our eyes, genders a novel sense,
At which we start and fret; till in the end,
Melting into its radiance, we blend,
Mingle, and so become a part of it,—
Nor with aught else can our souls interknit
So wingedly: when we combine therewith,
Life's self is nourish'd by its proper pith,
And we are nurtured like a pelican brood.
Aye, so delicious is the unsating food,
That men, who might have tower'd in the van
Of all the congregated world, to fan
And winnow from the coming step of time
All chaff of custom, wipe away all slime
Left by men-slugs and human serpentry,
Have been content to let occasion die,
Whilst they did sleep in love's elysium.
And, truly, I would rather be struck dumb,
Than speak against this ardent listlessness:
For I have ever thought that it might bless
The world with benefits unknowingly;
As does the nightingale, up-perched high,
And cloister'd among cool and bunched leaves—
She sings but to her love, nor e'er conceives
How tiptoe Night holds back her dark-grey hood.
Just so may love, although 't is understood
The mere commingling of passionate breath,
Produce more than our searching witnesseth:
What I know not: but who, of men, can tell
That flowers would bloom, or that green fruit would swell
To melting pulp, that fish would have bright mail,
The earth its dower of river, wood, and vale,
The meadows runnels, runnels pebble-stones,
The seed its harvest, or the lute its tones,
Tones ravishment, or ravishment its sweet,
If human souls did never kiss and greet?

"Now, if this earthly love has power to make
Men's being mortal, immortal; to shake
Ambition from their memories, and brim
Their measure of content; what merest whim,
Seems all this poor endeavour after fame,
To one, who keeps within his stedfast aim
A love immortal, an immortal too.
Look not so wilder'd; for these things are true,
And never can be born of atomies
That buzz about our slumbers, like brain-flies,
Leaving us fancy-sick. No, no, I 'm sure,
My restless spirit never could endure
To brood so long upon one luxury,
Unless it did, though fearfully, espy
A hope beyond the shadow of a dream.
My sayings will the less obscured seem
When I have told thee how my waking sight
Has made me scruple whether that same night
Was pass'd in dreaming. Hearken, sweet Peona!
Beyond the matron-temple of Latona,
Which we should see but for these darkening boughs,
Lies a deep hollow, from whose ragged brows
Bushes and trees do lean all round athwart,
And meet so nearly, that with wings outraught,
And spreaded tail, a vulture could not glide
Past them, but he must brush on every side.
Some moulder'd steps lead into this cool cell,
Far as the slabbed margin of a well,
Whose patient level peeps its crystal eye
Right upward, through the bushes, to the sky.
Oft have I brought thee flowers, on their stalks set
Like vestal primroses, but dark velvet
Edges them round, and they have golden pits:
'T was there I got them, from the gaps and slits
In a mossy stone, that sometimes was my seat,
When all above was faint with mid-day heat.
And there in strife no burning thoughts to heed,
I 'd bubble up the water through a reed;
So reaching back to boyhood: make me ships
Of moulted feathers, touchwood, alder chips,
With leaves stuck in them; and the Neptune be
Of their petty ocean. Oftener, heavily,
When love-lorn hours had left me less a child,
I sat contemplating the figures wild
Of o'er-head clouds melting the mirror through.
Upon a day, while thus I watch'd, by flew
A cloudy Cupid, with his bow and quiver;
So plainly character'd, no breeze would shiver
The happy chance: so happy, I was fain
To follow it upon the open plain,
And, therefore, was just going; when, behold!
A wonder, fair as any I have told—
The same bright face I tasted in my sleep,
Smiling in the clear well. My heart did leap
Through the cool depth.—It moved as if to flee—
I started up, when lo! refreshfully,
There came upon my face, in plenteous showers,
Dew-drops, and dewy buds, and leaves, and flowers,
Wrapping all objects from my smother'd sight,
Bathing my spirit in a new delight.
Aye, such a breathless honey-feel of bliss
Alone preserved me from the drear abyss
Of death, for the fair form had gone again.
Pleasure is oft a visitant; but pain
Clings cruelly to us, like the gnawing sloth
On the deer's tender haunches: late, and loth,
'T is scared away by slow-returning pleasure.
How sickening, how dark the dreadful leisure
Of weary days, made deeper exquisite,
By a fore-knowledge of unslumbrous night!
Like sorrow came upon me, heavier still,
Than when I wander'd from the poppy hill:
And a whole age of lingering moments crept
Sluggishly by, ere more contentment swept
Away at once the deadly yellow spleen.
Yes, thrice have I this fair enchantment seen;
Once more been tortured with renewed life.
When last the wintry gusts gave over strife
With the conquering sun of spring, and left the skies
Warm and serene, but yet with moisten'd eyes
In pity of the shatter'd infant buds,—
That time thou didst adorn, with amber studs,
My hunting-cap, because I laugh'd and smiled,
Chatted with thee, and many days exiled
All torment from my breast;—'t was even then,
Straying about, yet, coop'd up in the den
Of helpless discontent,—hurling my lance
From place to place, and following at chance,
At last, by hap, through some young trees it struck,
And, plashing among bedded pebbles, stuck

In the middle of a brook,—whose silver ramble
Down twenty little falls, through reeds and bramble,
Tracing along, it brought me to a cave,
Whence it ran brightly forth, and white did lave
The nether sides of mossy stones and rock,—
'Mong which it gurgled blithe adieus, to mock
Its own sweet grief at parting. Overhead,
Hung a lush screen of drooping weeds, and spread
Thick, as to curtain up some wood-nymph's home.
'Ah! impious mortal, whither do I roam?'
Said I, low voiced: 'Ah, whither! 'Tis the grot
Of Proserpine, when Hell, obscure and hot,
Doth her resign: and where her tender hands
She dabbles, on the cool and sluicy sands:
Or 't is the cell of Echo, where she sits,
And babbles thorough silence, till her wits
Are gone in tender madness, and anon,
Faints into sleep, with many a dying tone
Of sadness. O that she would take my vows,
And breathe them sighingly among the boughs,
To sue her gentle ears for whose fair head,
Daily, I pluck sweet flowerets from their bed,
And weave them dyingly—send honey-whispers
Round every leaf, that all those gentle lispers
May sigh my love unto her pitying!
O charitable echo! hear, and sing
This ditty to her!—tell her'—so I stay'd
My foolish tongue, and listening, half afraid,
Stood stupefied with my own empty folly,
And blushing for the freaks of melancholy.
Salt tears were coming, when I heard my name
Most fondly lipp'd, and then these accents came:
'Endymion! the cave is secreter
Than the isle of Delos. Echo hence shall stir
No sighs but sigh-warm kisses, or light noise
Of thy combing hand, the while it travelling cloys
And trembles through my labyrinthine hair.'
At that oppress'd, I hurried in.—Ah! where
Are those swift moments? Whither are they fled?
I 'll smile no more, Peona; nor will wed
Sorrow, the way to death; but patiently
Bear up against it: so farewell, sad sigh;
And come instead demurest meditation,
To occupy me wholly, and to fashion
My pilgrimage for the world's dusky brink.
No more will I count over, link by link,
My chain of grief: no longer strive to find
A half-forgetfulness in mountain wind
Blustering about my ears: ay, thou shalt see,
Dearest of sisters, what my life shall be;
What a calm round of hours shall make my days.
There is a paly flame of hope that plays
Where'er I look: but yet, I 'll say 't is naught—
And here I bid it die. Have not I caught,
Already, a more healthy countenance?
By this the sun is setting; we may chance
Meet some of our near-dwellers with my car.»

This said, he rose, faint-smiling like a star
Through autumn mists, and took Peona's hand:
They stept into the boat, and launch'd from land.

BOOK II.

O sovereign power of love! O grief! O balm!
All records, saving thine, come cool, and calm,
And shadowy, through the mist of passed years:
For others, good or bad, hatred and tears
Have become indolent; but touching thine,
One sigh doth echo, one poor sob doth pine,
One kiss brings honey-dew from buried days.
The woes of Troy, towers smothering o'er their blaze,
Stiff-holden shields, far-piercing spears, keen blades,
Struggling, and blood, and shrieks—all dimly fades
Into some backward corner of the brain;
Yet, in our very souls, we feel amain
The close of Troilus and Cressid sweet.
Hence, pageant history! hence, gilded cheat!
Swart planet in the universe of deeds!
Wide sea, that one continuous murmur breeds
Along the pebbled shore of memory!
Many old rotten-timber'd boats there be
Upon thy vaporous bosom, magnified
To goodly vessels; many a sail of pride,
And golden-keel'd, is left unlaunch'd and dry.
But wherefore this? What care, though owl did fly
About the great Athenian admiral's mast?
What care, though striding Alexander past
The Indus with his Macedonian numbers?
Though old Ulysses tortured from his slumbers
The glutted Cyclops, what care?—Juliet leaning
Amid her window-flowers,—sighing,—weaning
Tenderly her fancy from its maiden snow,
Doth more avail than these: the silver flow
Of Hero's tears, the swoon of Imogen,
Fair Pastorella in the bandit's den,
Are things to brood on with more ardency
Than the death-day of empires. Fearfully
Must such conviction come upon his head,
Who, thus far, discontent, has dared to tread,
Without one muse's smile, or kind behest,
The path of love and poesy. But rest,
In chafing restlessness, is yet more drear
Than to be crush'd, in striving to uprear
Love's standard on the battlements of song.
So once more days and nights aid me along,
Like legion'd soldiers.

Brain-sick shepherd-prince!
What promise hast thou faithful guarded since
The day of sacrifice? Or, have new sorrows
Come with the constant dawn upon thy morrows?
Alas! 't is his old grief. For many days,
Has he been wandering in uncertain ways:
Through wilderness, and woods of mossed oaks;
Counting his woe-worn minutes, by the strokes
Of the lone wood-cutter; and listening still,
Hour after hour, to each lush-leaved rill.
Now he is sitting by a shady spring,
And elbow-deep with feverous fingering
Stems the upbursting cold: a wild rose-tree
Pavilions him in bloom, and he doth see
A bud which snares his fancy: lo! but now
He plucks it, dips its stalk in the water: how!
It swells, it buds, it flowers beneath his sight;
And, in the middle, there is softly pight

A golden butterfly; upon whose wings
There must be surely character'd strange things,
For with wide eye he wonders, and smiles oft.

Lightly this little herald flew aloft,
Follow'd by glad Endymion's clasped hands:
Onward it flies. From languor's sullen bands
His limbs are loosed, and eager, on he hies
Dazzled to trace it in the sunny skies.
It seem'd he flew, the way so easy was;
And like a new-born spirit did he pass
Through the green evening quiet in the sun,
O'er many a heath, through many a woodland dun,
Through buried paths, where sleepy twilight dreams
The summer time away. One track unseams
A wooded cleft, and, far away, the blue
Of ocean fades upon him; then, anew,
He sinks adown a solitary glen,
Where there was never sound of mortal men,
Saving, perhaps, some snow-light cadences
Melting to silence, when upon the breeze
Some holy bark let forth an anthem sweet,
To cheer itself to Delphi. Still his feet
Went swift beneath the merry-winged guide,
Until it reached a splashing fountain's side
That, near a cavern's mouth, for ever pour'd
Unto the temperate air: then high it soar'd,
And, downward, suddenly began to dip,
As if, athirst with so much toil, 't would sip
The crystal spout-head: so it did, with touch
Most delicate, as though afraid to smutch
Even with mealy gold the waters clear.
But, at that very touch, to disappear
So fairy-quick, was strange! Bewildered,
Endymion sought around, and shook each bed
Of covert flowers in vain; and then he flung
Himself along the grass. What gentle tongue,
What whisperer disturb'd his gloomy rest?
It was a nymph uprisen to the breast
In the fountain's pebbly margin, and she stood
'Mong lilies, like the youngest of the brood.
To him her dripping hand she softly kist,
And anxiously began to plait and twist
Her ringlets round her fingers, saying: "Youth!
Too long, alas, hast thou starved on the ruth,
The bitterness of love: too long indeed,
Seeing thou art so gentle. Could I weed
Thy soul of care, by heavens, I would offer
All the bright riches of my crystal coffer
To Amphitrite; all my clear-eyed fish,
Golden, or rainbow-sided, or purplish,
Vermilion-tail'd, or finn'd with silvery gauze;
Yea, or my veined pebble-floor, that draws
A virgin light to the deep; my grotto-sands
Tawny and gold, oozed slowly from far lands
By my diligent springs; my level lilies, shells,
My charming rod, my potent river spells;
Yes, every thing, even to the pearly cup
Meander gave me,—for I bubbled up
To fainting creatures in a desert wild.
But woe is me, I am but as a child
To gladden thee; and all I dare to say,
Is, that I pity thee; that on this day
I 've been thy guide; that thou must wander far
In other regions, past the scanty bar
To mortal steps, before thou canst be ta'en
From every wasting sigh, from every pain,
Into the gentle bosom of thy love.
Why it is thus, one knows in heaven above:
But, a poor Naiad, I guess not. Farewell!
I have a ditty for my hollow cell."

Hereat, she vanished from Endymion's gaze,
Who brooded o'er the water in amaze:
The dashing fount pour'd on, and where its pool
Lay, half asleep, in grass and rushes cool,
Quick waterflies and gnats were sporting still,
And fish were dimpling, as if good nor ill
Had fallen out that hour. The wanderer,
Holding his forehead, to keep off the burr
Of smothering fancies, patiently sat down;
And, while beneath the evening's sleepy frown
Glow-worms began to trim their starry lamps,
Thus breath'd he to himself: "Whoso encamps
To take a fancied city of delight,
O what a wretch is he! and when 't is his,
After long toil and travelling, to miss
The kernel of his hopes, how more than vile!
Yet, for him there 's refreshment even in toil:
Another city doth he set about,
Free from the smallest pebble-bead of doubt
That he will seize on trickling honey-combs:
Alas, he finds them dry; and then he foams,
And onward to another city speeds.
But this is human life: the war, the deeds,
The disappointment, the anxiety,
Imagination's struggles, far and nigh,
All human; bearing in themselves this good,
That they are still the air, the subtle food,
To make us feel existence, and to show
How quiet death is. Where soil is men grow,
Whether to weeds or flowers; but for me,
There is no depth to strike in: I can see
Nought earthly worth my compassing; so stand
Upon a misty, jutting head of land—
Alone? No, no; and by the Orphean lute,
When mad Eurydice is listening to 't,
I 'd rather stand upon this misty peak,
With not a thing to sigh for, or to seek,
But the soft shadow of my thrice-seen love,
Than be—I care not what. O meekest dove
Of heaven! O Cynthia, ten-times bright and fair!
From thy blue throne, now filling all the air,
Glance but one little beam of temper'd light
Into my bosom, that the dreadful might
And tyranny of love be somewhat scared!
Yet do not so, sweet queen; one torment spared,
Would give a pang to jealous misery,
Worse than the torment's self: but rather tie
Large wings upon my shoulders, and point out
My love's far dwelling. Though the playful rout
Of Cupids shun thee, too divine art thou,
Too keen in beauty, for thy silver prow
Not to have dipp'd in love's most gentle stream.
O be propitious, nor severely deem
My madness impious; for, by all the stars
That tend thy bidding, I do think the bars
That kept my spirit in are burst—that I
Am sailing with thee through the dizzy sky!

How beautiful thou art! The world how deep!
How tremulous-dazzlingly the wheels sweep
Around their axle! Then these gleaming reins,
How lithe! When this thy chariot attains
Its airy goal, haply some bower veils
Those twilight eyes? Those eyes!—my spirit fails—
Dear goddess, help! or the wide-gaping air
Will gulf me—help!»—At this, with madden'd stare,
And lifted hands, and trembling lips he stood;
Like old Deucalion mountain'd o'er the flood,
Or blind Orion hungry for the morn.
And, but from the deep cavern there was borne
A voice, he had been froze to senseless stone;
Nor sigh of his, nor plaint, nor passion'd moan
Had more been heard. Thus swell'd it forth: «Descend,
Young mountaineer! descend where alleys bend
Into the sparry hollows of the world!
Oft hast thou seen bolts of the thunder hurl'd
As from thy threshold; day by day hast been
A little lower than the chilly sheen
Of icy pinnacles, and dipp'dst thine arms
Into the deadening ether that still charms
Their marble being: now, as deep profound
As those are high, descend! He ne'er is crown'd
With immortality, who fears to follow
Where airy voices lead: so through the hollow,
The silent mysteries of earth, descend!»

He heard but the last words, nor could contend
One moment in reflection: for he fled
Into the fearful deep, to hide his head
From the clear moon, the trees, and coming madness.

'T was far too strange, and wonderful for sadness;
Sharpening, by degrees, his appetite
To dive into the deepest. Dark, nor light,
The region; nor bright, nor sombre wholly,
But mingled up; a gleaming melancholy;
A dusky empire and its diadems;
One faint eternal eventide of gems.
Ay, millions sparkled on a vein of gold,
Along whose track the prince quick footsteps told,
With all its lines abrupt and angular:
Out-shooting sometimes, like a meteor-star,
Through a vast antre; then the metal woof,
Like Vulcan's rainbow, with some monstrous roof
Curves hugely: now, far in the deep abyss,
It seems an angry lightning, and doth hiss
Fancy into belief: anon it leads
Through winding passages, where sameness breeds
Vexing conceptions of some sudden change;
Whether to silver grots, or giant range
Of sapphire columns, or fantastic bridge
Athwart a flood of crystal. On a ridge
Now fareth he, that o'er the vast beneath
Towers like an ocean-cliff, and whence he seeth
A hundred waterfalls, whose voices come
But as the murmuring surge. Chilly and numb
His bosom grew, when first he, far away,
Descried an orbed diamond, set to fray
Old Darkness from his throne: 't was like the sun
Uprisen o'er chaos: and with such a stun
Came the amazement, that, absorb'd in it,
He saw not fiercer wonders—past the wit
Of any spirit to tell, but one of those
Who, when this planet's sphering time doth close,
Will be its high remembrancers: who they?
The mighty ones who have made eternal day
For Greece and England. While astonishment
With deep-drawn sighs was quieting, he went
Into a marble gallery, passing through
A mimic temple, so complete and true
In sacred custom, that he well nigh fear'd
To search it inwards; whence far off appear'd,
Through a long pillar'd vista, a fair shrine,
And, just beyond, on light tiptoe divine,
A quiver'd Dian. Stepping awfully,
The youth approach'd; oft turning his veil'd eye
Down sidelong aisles, and into niches old:
And, when more near against the marble cold
He had touch'd his forehead, he began to thread
All courts and passages, where silence dead,
Roused by his whispering footsteps, murmur'd faint:
And long he traversed to and fro, to acquaint
Himself with every mystery, and awe;
Till, weary, he sat down before the maw
Of a wide outlet, fathomless and dim,
To wild uncertainty and shadows grim.
There, when new wonders ceased to float before,
And thoughts of self came on, how crude and sore
The journey homeward to habitual self!
A mad-pursuing of the fog-born elf,
Whose flitting lantern, through rude nettle-briar,
Cheats us into a swamp, into a fire,
Into the bosom of a hated thing.

What misery most drowningly doth sing
In lone Endymion's ear, now he has caught
The goal of consciousness? Ah, 't is the thought,
The deadly feel of solitude: for lo!
He cannot see the heavens, nor the flow
Of rivers, nor hill-flowers running wild
In pink and purple chequer, nor, up-piled,
The cloudy rack slow journeying in the west,
Like herded elephants; nor felt, nor prest
Cool grass, nor tasted the fresh slumberous air;
But far from such companionship to wear
An unknown time, surcharged with grief, away,
Was now his lot. And must he patient stay,
Tracing fantastic figures with his spear?
« No!» exclaim'd he, « why should I tarry here?»
No! loudly echoed times innumerable.
At which he straightway started, and 'gan tell
His paces back into the temple's chief;
Warming and glowing strong in the belief
Of help from Dian: so that when again
He caught her airy form, thus did he plain,
Moving more near the while. « O Haunter chaste
Of river sides, and woods, and heathy waste,
Where with thy silver bow and arrows keen
Art thou now forested? O woodland Queen,
What smoothest air thy smoother forehead woos?
Where dost thou listen to the wide halloos
Of thy disparted nymphs? Through what dark tree
Glimmers thy crescent? Wheresoe'er it be,
'T is in the breath of heaven: thou dost taste
Freedom as none can taste it, nor dost waste
Thy loveliness in dismal elements;
But, finding in our green earth sweet contents,
There livest blissfully. Ah, if to thee
It feels Elysian, how rich to me,

An exiled mortal, sounds its pleasant name!
Within my breast there lives a choking flame—
O let me cool it among the zephyr-boughs!
A homeward fever parches up my tongue—
O let me slake it at the running springs!
Upon my ear a noisy nothing rings—
O let me once more hear the linnet's note!
Before mine eyes thick films and shadows float—
O let me 'noint them with the heaven's light!
Dost thou now lave thy feet and ankles white?
O think how sweet to me the freshening sluice!
Dost thou now please thy thirst with berry-juice?
O think how this dry palate would rejoice!
If in soft slumber thou dost hear my voice,
O think how I should love a bed of flowers!—
Young goddess! let me see my native bowers!
Deliver me from this rapacious deep!»

Thus ending loudly, as he would o'erleap
His destiny, alert he stood: but when
Obstinate silence came heavily again,
Feeling about for its old couch of space
And airy cradle, lowly bow'd his face,
Desponding, o'er the marble floor's cold thrill.
But 't was not long; for, sweeter than the rill
To its old channel, or a swollen tide
To margin sallows, were the leaves he spied,
And flowers, and wreaths, and ready myrtle crowns
Up heaping through the slab: refreshment drowns
Itself, and strives its own delights to hide—
Nor in one spot alone; the floral pride
In a long whispering birth enchanted grew
Before his footsteps; as when heaved anew
Old ocean rolls a lengthen'd wave to the shore,
Down whose green back the short-lived foam, all hoar,
Bursts gradual, with a wayward indolence.

Increasing still in heart, and pleasant sense,
Upon his fairy journey on he hastes;
So anxious for the end, he scarcely wastes
One moment with his hand among the sweets:
Onward he goes—he stops—his bosom beats
As plainly in his ear, as the faint charm
Of which the throbs were born. This still alarm,
This sleepy music, forced him walk tiptoe:
For it came more softly than the east could blow
Arion's magic to the Atlantic isles;
Or than the west, made jealous by the smiles
Of throned Apollo, could breathe back the lyre
To seas Ionian and Tyrian.

O did he ever live, that lonely man,
Who loved—and music slew not? 'T is the pest
Of love, that fairest joys give most unrest;
That things of delicate and tenderest worth
Are swallow'd all, and made a seared dearth,
By one consuming flame: it doth immerse
And suffocate true blessings in a curse.
Half-happy, by comparison of bliss,
Is miserable. 'T was even so with this
Dew-dropping melody, in the Carian's ear;
First heaven, then hell, and then forgotten clear,
Vanish'd in elemental passion.

And down some swart abysm he had gone,
Had not a heavenly guide benignant led
To where thick myrtle branches, 'gainst his head
Brushing, awaken'd: then the sounds again
Went noiseless as a passing noontide rain
Over a bower, where little space he stood;
For as the sunset peeps into a wood,
So saw he panting light, and towards it went
Through winding alleys; and lo, wonderment!
Upon soft verdure saw, one here, one there,
Cupids a slumbering on their pinions fair.

After a thousand mazes overgone,
At last, with sudden step, he came upon
A chamber, myrtle-wall'd, embower'd high,
Full of light, incense, tender minstrelsy,
And more of beautiful and strange beside:
For on a silken couch of rosy pride,
In midst of all, there lay a sleeping youth
Of fondest beauty; fonder, in fair sooth,
Than sighs could fathom, or contentment reach:
And coverlids gold-tinted like the peach,
Or ripe October's faded marigolds,
Fell sleek about him in a thousand folds—
Not hiding up an Apollonian curve
Of neck and shoulder, nor the tenting swerve
Of knee from knee, nor ankles pointing light;
But rather, giving them to the fill'd sight
Officiously. Sideway his face reposed
On one white arm, and tenderly unclosed,
By tenderest pressure, a faint damask mouth
To slumbery pout; just as the morning south
Disparts a dew-lipp'd rose. Above his head,
Four lily stalks did their white honours wed
To make a coronal; and round him grew
All tendrils green, of every bloom and hue,
Together intertwined and tramell'd fresh:
The vine of glossy sprout; the ivy mesh,
Shading its Ethiop berries; and woodbine,
Of velvet leaves and bugle-blooms divine;
Convolvulus in streaked vases flush;
The creeper, mellowing for an autumn blush;
And virgin's bower, trailing airily;
With others of the sisterhood. Hard by,
Stood serene Cupids watching silently.
One, kneeling to a lyre, touch'd the strings,
Muffling to death the pathos with his wings;
And, ever and anon, uprose to look
At the youth's slumber; while another took
A willow bough, distilling odorous dew,
And shook it on his hair; another flew
In through the woven roof, and fluttering-wise
Rain'd violets upon his sleeping eyes.

At these enchantments, and yet many more,
The breathless Latmian wonder'd o'er and o'er;
Until impatient in embarrassment,
He forthright pass'd, and lightly treading went
To that same feather'd lyrist, who straightway,
Smiling, thus whisper'd: «Though from upper day
Thou art a wanderer, and thy presence here
Might seem unholy, be of happy cheer!
For 't is the nicest touch of human honour,
When some ethereal and high-favouring donor
Presents immortal bowers to mortal sense;
As now 't is done to thee, Endymion. Hence
Was I in no wise startled. So recline
Upon these living flowers. Here is wine,

Alive with sparkles—never, I aver,
Since Ariadne was a vintager,
So cool a purple: taste these juicy pears,
Sent me by sad Vertumnus, when his fears
Were high about Pomona: here is cream,
Deepening to richness from a snowy gleam;
Sweeter than that nurse Amalthea skimm'd
For the boy Jupiter: and here, undimm'd
By any touch, a bunch of blooming plums
Ready to melt between an infant's gums:
And here is manna pick'd from Syrian trees,
In starlight, by the three Hesperides.
Feast on, and meanwhile I will let thee know
Of all these things around us.» He did so,
Still brooding o'er the cadence of his lyre;
And thus: «I need not any hearing tire
By telling how the sea-born goddess pined
For a mortal youth, and how she strove to bind
Him all in all unto her doting self.
Who would not be so prison'd? but, fond elf,
He was content to let her amorous plea
Faint through his careless arms; content to see
An unseized heaven dying at his feet;
Content, O fool! to make a cold retreat,
When on the pleasant grass such love, lovelorn,
Lay sorrowing; when every tear was born
Of diverse passion; when her lips and eyes
Were closed in sullen moisture, and quick sighs
Came vex'd and pettish through her nostrils small.
Hush! no exclaim—yet, justly mightst thou call
Curses upon his head.—I was half glad,
But my poor mistress went distract and mad,
When the boar tusk'd him: so away she flew
To Jove's high throne, and by her plainings drew
Immortal tear-drops down the thunderer's beard;
Whereon, it was decreed he should be rear'd
Each summer-time to life. Lo! this is he,
That same Adonis, safe in the privacy
Of this still region all his winter-sleep.
Ay, sleep; for when our love-sick queen did weep
Over his waned corse, the tremulous shower
Heal'd up the wound, and, with a balmy power,
Medicined death to a lengthen'd drowsiness:
The which she fills with visions, and doth dress
In all this quiet luxury; and hath set
Us young immortals, without any let,
To watch his slumber through. 'T is well nigh pass'd,
Even to a moment's filling up, and fast
She scuds with summer breezes, to pant through
The first long kiss, warm firstling, to renew
Embower'd sports in Cytherea's isle.
Look, how those winged listeners all this while
Stand anxious: see! behold!»—This clamant word
Broke through the careful silence; for they heard
A rustling noise of leaves, and out there flutter'd
Pigeons and doves: Adonis something mutter'd,
The while one hand, that erst upon his thigh
Lay dormant, moved convulsed and gradually
Up to his forehead. Then there was a hum
Of sudden voices, echoing, «Come! come!
Arise! awake! Clear summer has forth walk'd
Unto the clover-sward, and she has talk'd
Full soothingly to every nested finch:
Rise, Cupids! or we 'll give the blue-bell pinch
To your dimpled arms. Once more sweet life begin!»
At this, from every side they hurried in,
Rubbing their sleepy eyes with lazy wrists,
And doubling over head their little fists
In backward yawns. But all were soon alive:
For as delicious wine doth, sparkling, dive
In nectar'd clouds and curls through water fair,
So from the arbour roof down swell'd an air
Odorous and enlivening; making all
To laugh, and play, and sing, and loudly call
For their sweet queen: when lo! the wreathed green
Disparted, and far upward could be seen
Blue heaven, and a silver car, air-borne,
Whose silent wheels, fresh wet from clouds of morn,
Spun off a drizzling dew,—which falling chill
On soft Adonis' shoulders, made him still
Nestle and turn uneasily about.
Soon were the white doves plain, with necks stretch'd out,
And silken traces lighten'd in descent;
And soon, returning from love's banishment,
Queen Venus leaning downward open-arm'd:
Her shadow fell upon his breast, and charm'd
A tumult to his heart, and a new life
Into his eyes. Ah, miserable strife,
But for her comforting! unhappy sight,
But meeting her blue orbs! Who, who can write
Of these first minutes? The unchariest muse
To embracements warm as theirs makes coy excuse.

O it has ruffled every spirit there,
Saving love's self, who stands superb to share
The general gladness: awfully he stands;
A sovereign quell is in his waving hands;
No sight can bear the lightning of his bow;
His quiver is mysterious, none can know
What themselves think of it; from forth his eyes
There darts strange light of varied hues and dyes:
A scowl is sometimes on his brow, but who
Look full upon it feel anon the blue
Of his fair eyes run liquid through their souls.
Endymion feels it, and no more controls
The burning prayer within him; so, bent low,
He had begun a plaining of his woe.
But Venus, bending forward, said: «My child,
Favour this gentle youth; his days are wild
With love—he—but alas! too well I see
Thou know'st the deepness of his misery.
Ah, smile not so, my son: I tell thee true,
That when through heavy hours I used to rue
The endless sleep of this new-born Adon',
This stranger ay I pitied. For upon
A dreary morning once I fled away
Into the breezy clouds, to weep and pray
For this my love: for vexing Mars had teazed
Me even to tears: thence, when a little eased,
Down-looking, vacant, through a hazy wood,
I saw this youth as he despairing stood:
Those same dark curls blown vagrant in the wind;
Those same full fringed lids a constant blind
Over his sullen eyes: I saw him throw
Himself on wither'd leaves, even as though
Death had come sudden; for no jot he moved,
Yet mutter'd wildly. I could hear he loved
Some fair immortal, and that his embrace
Had zoned her through the night. There is no trace
Of this in heaven: I have mark'd each cheek,
And find it is the vainest thing to seek;

And that of all things 't is kept secretest.
Endymion! one day thou wilt be blest:
So still obey the guiding hand that fends
Thee safely through these wonders for sweet ends.
'T is a concealment needful in extreme;
And if I guess'd not so, the sunny beam
Thou shouldst mount up to with me. Now adieu!
Here must we leave thee.»—At these words up flew
The impatient doves, up rose the floating car,
Up went the hum celestial. High afar
The Latmian saw them minish into nought;
And, when all were clear vanish'd, still he caught
A vivid lightning from that dreadful bow.
When all was darken'd, with Etnean throe
The earth closed—gave a solitary moan—
And left him once again in twilight lone.

He did not rave, he did not stare aghast,
For all those visions were o'ergone, and past,
And he in loneliness: he felt assured
Of happy times, when all he had endured
Would seem a feather to the mighty prize.
So, with unusual gladness, on he hies
Through caves, and palaces of mottled ore,
Gold dome, and crystal wall, and turquois floor,
Black polish'd porticos of awful shade,
And, at the last, a diamond balustrade,
Leading afar past wild magnificence,
Spiral through ruggedest loop-holes, and thence
Stretching across a void, then guiding o'er
Enormous chasms, where, all foam and roar,
Streams subterranean teaze their granite beds;
Then heighten'd just above the silvery heads
Of a thousand fountains, so that he could dash
The waters with his spear; but at the splash,
Done heedlessly, those spouting columns rose
Sudden a poplar's height, and 'gan to enclose
His diamond path with fretwork streaming round
Alive, and dazzling cool, and with a sound,
Haply, like dolphin tumults, when sweet shells
Welcome the float of Thetis. Long he dwells
On this delight; for, every minute's space,
The streams with changed magic interlace:
Sometimes like delicatest lattices,
Cover'd with crystal vines; then weeping trees,
Moving about as in a gentle wind,
Which, in a wink, to watery gauze refined,
Pour'd into shapes of curtain'd canopies,
Spangled, and rich with liquid broideries
Of flowers, peacocks, swans, and naiads fair.
Swifter than lightning went these wonders rare;
And then the water, into stubborn streams
Collecting, mimick'd the wrought oaken beams,
Pillars, and frieze, and high fantastic roof,
Of those dusk places in times far aloof
Cathedrals call'd. He bade a loth farewell
To these founts Protean, passing gulf, and dell,
And torrent, and ten thousand jutting shapes,
Half seen through deepest gloom, and grisly gapes,
Blackening on every side, and overhead
A vaulted dome like Heaven's, far bespread
With starlight gems: aye, all so huge and strange,
The solitary felt a hurried change
Working within him into something dreary,—
Vex'd like a morning eagle, lost, and weary,
And purblind amid foggy midnight wolds.
But he revives at once: for who beholds
New sudden things, nor casts his mental slough?
Forth from a rugged arch, in the dusk below,
Came mother Cybele! alone—alone—
In sombre chariot; dark foldings thrown
About her majesty, and front death-pale,
With turrets crown'd. Four maned lions hale
The sluggish wheels; solemn their toothed maws,
Their surly eyes brow-hidden, heavy paws
Uplifted drowsily, and nervy tails
Cowering their tawny brushes. Silent sails
This shadowy queen athwart, and faints away
In another gloomy arch.

Wherefore delay,
Young traveller, in such a mournful place?
Art thou wayworn, or canst not further trace
The diamond path? And does it indeed end
Abrupt in middle air? Yet earthward bend
Thy forehead, and to Jupiter cloud-borne
Call ardently! He was indeed wayworn;
Abrupt, in middle air, his way was lost;
To cloud-borne Jove he bowed, and there crost
Towards him a large eagle, 't wixt whose wings,
Without one impious word, himself he flings,
Committed to the darkness and the gloom:
Down, down, uncertain to what pleasant doom,
Swift as a fathoming plummet down he fell
Through unknown things; till exhaled asphodel,
And rose, with spicy fannings interbreathed,
Came swelling forth where little caves were wreathed
So thick with leaves and mosses, that they seem'd
Large honey-combs of green, and freshly teem'd
With airs delicious. In the greenest nook
The eagle landed him, and farewell took.

It was a jasmine bower, all bestrown
With golden moss. His every sense had grown
Ethereal for pleasure; 'bove his head
Flew a delight half-graspable; his tread
Was Hesperean; to his capable ears
Silence was music from the holy spheres;
A dewy luxury was in his eyes;
The little flowers felt his pleasant sighs
And stirr'd them faintly. Verdant cave and cell
He wander'd through, oft wondering at such swell
Of sudden exaltation: but, «Alas!»
Said he, «will all this gush of feeling pass
Away in solitude? And must they wane,
Like melodies upon a sandy plain,
Without an echo? Then shall I be left
So sad, so melancholy, so bereft!
Yet still I feel immortal! O my love,
My breath of life, where art thou? High above,
Dancing before the morning gates of heaven?
Or keeping watch among those starry seven,
Old Atlas' children? Art a maid of the waters,
One of shell-winding Triton's bright-hair'd daughters?
Or art, impossible! a nymph of Dian's,
Weaving a coronal of tender scions
For very idleness? Where'er thou art,
Methinks it now is at my will to start
Into thine arms; to scare Aurora's train,
And snatch thee from the morning; o'er the main

To scud like a wild bird, and take thee off
From thy sea-foamy cradle; or to doff
Thy shepherd vest, and woo thee mid fresh leaves.
No, no, too eagerly my soul deceives
Its powerless self: I know this cannot be.
O let me then by some sweet dreaming flee
To her entrancements: hither sleep awhile!
Hither most gentle sleep! and soothing foil
For some few hours the coming solitude.»

Thus spake he, and that moment felt endued
With power to dream deliciously; so wound
Through a dim passage, searching till he found
The smoothest mossy bed and deepest, where
He threw himself, and just into the air
Stretching his indolent arms, he took, O bliss!
A naked waist: «Fair Cupid, whence is this?»
A well-known voice sigh'd, «Sweetest, here am I!»
At which soft ravishment, with doating cry
They trembled to each other.—Helicon!
O fountain'd hill! Old Homer's Helicon!
That thou wouldst spout a little streamlet o'er
These sorry pages; then the verse would soar
And sing above this gentle pair, like lark
Over his nested young: but all is dark
Around thine aged top, and thy clear fount
Exhales in mists to heaven. Aye, the count
Of mighty Poets is made up; the scroll
Is folded by the Muses; the bright roll
Is in Apollo's hand: our dazed eyes
Have seen a new tinge in the western skies:
The world has done its duty. Yet, oh yet,
Although the sun of poesy is set,
These lovers did embrace, and we must weep
That there is no old power left to steep
A quill immortal in their joyous tears.
Long time in silence did their anxious fears
Question that thus it was; long time they lay
Fondling and kissing every doubt away;
Long time ere soft caressing sobs began
To mellow into words, and then there ran
Two bubbling springs of talk from their sweet lips.
«O known Unknown! from whom my being sips
Such darling essence, wherefore may I not
Be ever in these arms? in this sweet spot
Pillow my chin for ever? ever press
These toying hands and kiss their smooth excess?
Why not for ever and for ever feel
That breath about my eyes? Ah, thou wilt steal
Away from me again, indeed, indeed—
Thou wilt be gone away, and wilt not heed
My lonely madness. Speak, my kindest fair!
Is—is it to be so? No! Who will dare
To pluck thee from me? And, of thine own will,
Full well I feel thou wouldst not leave me. Still
Let me entwine thee surer, surer—now
How can we part? Elysium! who art thou?
Who, that thou canst not be for ever here,
Or lift me with thee to some starry sphere?
Enchantress! tell me by this soft embrace,
By the most soft complexion of thy face,
Those lips, O slippery blisses! twinkling eyes,
And by these tenderest, milky sovereignties—
These tenderest, and by the nectar-wine,
The passion»———«O loved Ida the divine!
Endymion! dearest! Ah, unhappy me!
His soul will 'scape us—O felicity!
How he does love me! His poor temples beat
To the very tune of love—how sweet, sweet, sweet!
Revive, dear youth; or I shall faint and die;
Revive, or these soft hours will hurry by
In tranced dulness; speak, and let that spell
Affright this lethargy! I cannot quell
Its heavy pressure, and will press at least
My lips to thine, that they may richly feast
Until we taste the life of love again.
What! dost thou move? dost kiss? O bliss! O pain!
I love thee, youth, more than I can conceive;
And so long absence from thee doth bereave
My soul of any rest: yet must I hence:
Yet, can I not to starry eminence
Uplift thee; nor for very shame can own
Myself to thee. Ah, dearest! do not groan,
Or thou wilt force me from this secrecy,
And I must blush in heaven. O that I
Had done it already! that the dreadful smiles
At my lost brightness, my impassion'd wiles,
Had waned from Olympus' solemn height,
And from all serious Gods; that our delight
Was quite forgotten, save of us alone!
And wherefore so ashamed? 'T is but to atone
For endless pleasure, by some coward blushes:
Yet must I be a coward! Horror rushes
Too palpable before me—the sad look
Of Jove—Minerva's start—no bosom shook
With awe of purity—no Cupid pinion
In reverence veil'd—my crystaline dominion
Half lost, and all old hymns made nullity!
But what is this to love? Oh! I could fly
With thee into the ken of heavenly powers,
So thou wouldst thus, for many sequent hours,
Press me so sweetly. Now I swear at once
That I am wise, that Pallas is a dunce—
Perhaps her love like mine is but unknown—
Oh! I do think that I have been alone
In chastity! yes, Pallas has been sighing,
While every eve saw me my hair uptying
With fingers cool as aspen leaves. Sweet love!
I was as vague as solitary dove,
Nor knew that nests were built. Now a soft kiss—
Aye, by that kiss, I vow an endless bliss,
An immortality of passion's thine:
Ere long I will exalt thee to the shine
Of heaven ambrosial; and we will shade
Ourselves whole summers by a river glade;
And I will tell thee stories of the sky,
And breathe thee whispers of its minstrelsy.
My happy love will overwing all bounds!
O let me melt into thee! let the sounds
Of our close voices marry at their birth;
Let us entwine hoveringly!—O dearth
Of human words! roughness of mortal speech!
Lispings empyrean will I sometime teach
Thine honey'd tongue—lute-breathings, which I gasp
To have thee understand, now while I clasp
Thee thus, and weep for fondness—I am pain'd,
Endymion: woe! woe! is grief contain'd
In the very deeps of pleasure, my sole life?»—
Hereat, with many sobs, her gentle strife
Melted into a languor. He return'd
Entranced vows and tears.

Ye who have yearn'd
With too much passion, will here stay and pity,
For the mere sake of truth; as 't is a ditty
Not of these days, but long ago 't was told
By a cavern wind unto a forest old;
And then the forest told it in a dream
To a sleeping lake, whose cool and level gleam
A poet caught as he was journeying
To Phœbus' shrine; and in it he did fling
His weary limbs, bathing an hour's space,
And after, straight in that inspired place
He sang the story up into the air,
Giving it universal freedom. There
Has it been ever sounding for those ears
Whose tips are glowing hot. The legend cheers
Yon centinel stars; and he who listens to it
Must surely be self-doomed or he will rue it:
For quenchless burnings come upon the heart,
Made fiercer by a fear lest any part
Should be engulfed in the eddying wind.
As much as here is penn'd doth always find
A resting-place, thus much comes clear and plain;
Anon the strange voice is upon the wane—
And 't is but echo'd from departing sound,
That the fair visitant at last unwound
Her gentle limbs, and left the youth asleep.—
Thus the tradition of the gusty deep.

Now turn we to our former chroniclers.—
Endymion awoke, that grief of hers
Sweet paining on his ear: he sickly guess'd
How lone he was once more, and sadly press'd
His empty arms together, hung his head,
And most forlorn upon that widow'd bed
Sat silently. Love's madness he had known:
Often with more than tortured lion's groan
Moanings had burst from him; but now that rage
Had pass'd away: no longer did he wage
A rough-voiced war against the dooming stars.
No, he had felt too much for such harsh jars:
The lyre of his soul Eolian tuned
Forgot all violence, and but communed
With melancholy thought: O he had swoon'd
Drunken from pleasure's nipple! and his love
Henceforth was dove-like.—Loth was he to move
From the imprinted couch, and when he did,
'T was with slow, languid paces, and face hid
In muffling hands. So temper'd, out he stray'd
Half seeing visions that might have dismay'd
Alecto's serpents; ravishments more keen
Than Hermes' pipe, when anxious he did lean
Over eclipsing eyes: and at the last
It was a sounding grotto, vaulted, vast,
O'er-studded with a thousand, thousand pearls,
And crimson-mouthed shells with stubborn curls,
Of every shape and size, even to the bulk
In which whales arbour close, to brood and sulk
Against an endless storm. Moreover too,
Fish-semblances, of green and azure hue,
Ready to snort their streams. In this cool wonder
Endymion sat down, and 'gan to ponder
On all his life: his youth, up to the day
When 'mid acclaim, and feasts, and garlands gay,
He stept upon his shepherd throne: the look
Of his white palace in wild forest nook,
And all the revels he had lorded there:
Each tender maiden whom he once thought fair,
With every friend and fellow-woodlander—
Pass'd like a dream before him. Then the spur
Of the old bards to mighty deeds: his plans
To nurse the golden age 'mong shepherd clans:
That wondrous night: the great Pan-festival:
His sister's sorrow; and his wanderings all,
Until into the earth's deep maw he rush'd:
Then all its buried magic, till it flush'd
High with excessive love. «And now,» thought he,
«How long must I remain in jeopardy
Of blank amazements that amaze no more?
Now I have tasted her sweet soul to the core,
All other depths are shallow: essences,
Once spiritual, are like muddy lees,
Meant but to fertilize my earthly root,
And make my branches lift a golden fruit
Into the bloom of heaven: other light,
Though it be quick and sharp enough to blight
The Olympian eagle's vision, is dark,
Dark as the parentage of chaos. Hark!
My silent thoughts are echoing from these shells;
Or they are but the ghosts, the dying swells
Of noises far away?—list!—Hereupon
He kept an anxious ear. The humming tone
Came louder, and behold, there as he lay,
On either side outgush'd, with misty spray,
A copious spring; and both together dash'd
Swift, mad, fantastic round the rocks, and lash'd
Among the conchs and shells of the lofty grot,
Leaving a trickling dew. At last they shot
Down from the ceiling's height, pouring a noise
As of some breathless racers whose hopes poize
Upon the last few steps, and with spent force
Along the ground they took a winding course.
Endymion follow'd—for it seem'd that one
Ever pursued, the other strove to shun—
Follow'd their languid mazes, till well nigh
He had left thinking of the mystery,—
And was now rapt in tender hoverings
Over the vanish'd bliss. Ah! what is it sings
His dream away? What melodies are these?
They sound as through the whispering of trees,
Not native in such barren vaults. Give ear!

«O Arethusa, peerless nymph! why fear
Such tenderness as mine? Great Dian, why,
Why didst thou hear her prayer? O that I
Were rippling round her dainty fairness now,
Circling about her waist, and striving how
To entice her to a dive! then stealing in
Between her luscious lips and eyelids thin.
O that her shining hair was in the sun,
And I distilling from it thence to run
In amorous rillets down her shrinking form!
To linger on her lily shoulders, warm
Between her kissing breasts, and every charm
Touch raptured!—See how painfully I flow:
Fair maid, be pitiful to my great woe.
Stay, stay thy weary course, and let me lead,
A happy wooer, to the flowery mead
Where all that beauty snared me.»—«Cruel god,
Desist! or my offended mistress' nod
Will stagnate all thy fountains:—teaze me not

With syren words—Ah, have I really got
Such power to madden thee? And is it true—
Away, away, or I shall dearly rue
My very thoughts: in mercy then away,
Kindest Alpheus, for should I obey
My own dear will, 't would be a deadly bane.»—
« O, Oread-Queen! would that thou hadst a pain
Like this of mine, then would I fearless turn
And be a criminal.»—« Alas, I burn,
I shudder—gentle river, get thee hence.
Alpheus! thou enchanter! every sense
Of mine was once made perfect in these woods.
Fresh breezes, bowery lawns, and innocent floods,
Ripe fruits, and lonely couch, contentment gave;
But ever since I heedlessly did lave
In thy deceitful stream, a panting glow
Grew strong within me: wherefore serve me so,
And call it love? Alas! 't was cruelty.
Not once more did I close my happy eyes
Amid the thrush's song. Away! Avaunt!
O 't was a cruel thing.»—« Now thou dost taunt
So softly, Arethusa, that I think
If thou wast playing on my shady brink,
Thou wouldst bathe once again. Innocent maid!
Stifle thine heart no more;—nor be afraid
Of angry powers: there are deities
Will shade us with their wings. Those fitful sighs
'T is almost death to hear: O let me pour
A dewy balm upon them!—fear no more,
Sweet Arethusa! Dian's self must feel,
Sometimes, these very pangs. Dear maiden, steal
Blushing into my soul, and let us fly
These dreary caverns for the open sky.
I will delight thee all my winding course,
From the green sea up to my hidden source
About Arcadian forests; and will show
The channels where my coolest waters flow
Through mossy rocks; where, 'mid exuberant green,
I roam in pleasant darkness, more unseen
Than Saturn in his exile; where I brim
Round flowery islands, and take thence a skim
Of mealy sweets, which myriads of bees
Buzz from their honey'd wings: and thou shouldst please
Thyself to chuse the richest, where we might
Be incense-pillow'd every summer night.
Doff all sad fears, thou white deliciousness,
And let us be thus comforted; unless
Thou couldst rejoice to see my hopeless stream
Hurry distracted from Sol's temperate beam,
And pour to death along some hungry sands.»—
« What can I do, Alpheus? Dian stands
Severe before me: persecuting fate!
Unhappy Arethusa! thou wast late
A huntress free in»—At this, sudden fell
Those two sad streams adown a fearful dell.
The Latmian listen'd, but he heard no more,
Save echo, faint repeating o'er and o'er
The name of Arethusa. On the verge
Of that dark gulf he wept, and said: « I urge
Thee, gentle Goddess of my pilgrimage,
By our eternal hopes, to soothe, to assuage,
If thou art powerful, these lovers' pains;
And make them happy in some happy plains.»

He turn'd—there was a whelming sound—he stept,
There was a cooler light; and so he kept
Towards it by a sandy path, and lo!
More suddenly than doth a moment go,
The visions of the earth were gone and fled—
He saw the giant sea above his head.

BOOK III.

There are who lord it o'er their fellow-men
With most prevailing tinsel: who unpen
Their baaing vanities, to browse away
The comfortable green and juicy hay
From human pastures; or, O torturing fact!
Who, through an idiot blink, will see unpack'd
Fire-branded foxes to sear up and singe
Our gold and ripe-ear'd hopes. With not one tinge
Of sanctuary splendour, not a sight
Able to face an owl's, they still are dight
By the blear-eyed nations in empurpled vests,
And crowns, and turbans. With unladen breasts,
Save of blown self-applause, they proudly mount
To their spirit's perch, their being's high account,
Their tiptop nothings, their dull skies, their thrones—
Amid the fierce intoxicating tones
Of trumpets, shoutings, and belabour'd drums,
And sudden cannon. Ah! how all this hums,
In wakeful ears, like uproar past and gone—
Like thunder-clouds that spake to Babylon,
And set those old Chaldeans to their tasks.—
Are then regalities all gilded masks?
No, there are throned seats unscalable
But by a patient wing, a constant spell,
Or by ethereal things that, unconfined,
Can make a ladder of the eternal wind,
And poise about in cloudy thunder-tents
To watch the abysm-birth of elements.
Aye, 'bove the withering of old-lipp'd Fate
A thousand Powers keep religious state,
In water, fiery realm, and airy bourne;
And, silent as a consecrated urn,
Hold sphery sessions for a season due.
Yet few of these far majesties, ah, few!
Have bared their operations to this globe—
Few, who with gorgeous pageantry enrobe
Our piece of heaven—whose benevolence
Shakes hand with our own Ceres; every sense
Filling with spiritual sweets to plenitude,
As bees gorge full their cells. And by the feud
'Twixt Nothing and Creation, I here swear,
Eterne Apollo! that thy Sister fair
Is of all these the gentlier-mightiest.
When thy gold breath is misting in the west,
She unobserved steals unto her throne,
And there she sits most meek and most alone;
As if she had not pomp subservient;
As if thine eye, high Poet! was not bent
Towards her with the Muses in thine heart;
As if the ministring stars kept not apart,
Waiting for silver-footed messages.
O Moon! the oldest shades 'mong oldest trees
Feel palpitations when thou lookest in:
O Moon! old boughs lisp forth a holier din
The while they feel thine airy fellowship.
Thou dost bless every where, with silver lip

Kissing dead things to life. The sleeping kine,
Couch'd in thy brightness, dream of fileds divine:
Innumerable mountains rise, and rise,
Ambitious for the hallowing of thine eyes;
And yet thy benediction passeth not
One obscure hiding-place, one little spot
Where pleasure may be sent: the nested wren
Has thy fair face within its tranquil ken,
And from beneath a sheltering ivy leaf
Takes glimpses of thee; thou art a relief
To the poor patient oyster, where it sleeps
Within its pearly house:—The mighty deeps,
The monstrous sea is thine—the myriad sea!
O Moon! far-spooming Ocean bows to thee,
And Tellus feels her forehead's cumbrous load.

Cynthia! where art thou now? What far abode
Of green or silvery bower doth enshrine
Such utmost beauty? Alas, thou dost pine
For one as sorrowful: thy cheek is pale
For one whose cheek is pale: thou dost bewail
His tears, who weeps for thee. Where dost thou sigh?
Ah! surely that light peeps from Vesper's eye,
Or what a thing is love! 'T is She, but lo!
How changed, how full of ache, how gone in woe!
She dies at the thinnest cloud; her loveliness
Is wan on Neptune's blue: yet there 's a stress
Of love-spangles, just off yon cape of trees,
Dancing upon the waves, as if to please
The curly foam with amorous influence.
O, not so idle! for down-glancing thence,
She fathoms eddies, and runs wild about
O'erwhelming water-courses; scaring out
The thorny sharks from hiding-holes, and fright'ning
Their savage eyes with unaccustom'd lightning.
Where will the splendour be content to reach?
O love! how potent hast thou been to teach
Strange journeyings! Wherever beauty dwells,
In gulf or aerie, mountains or deep dells,
In light, in gloom, in star or blazing sun,
Thou pointest out the way, and straight 't is won.
Amid his toil thou gavest Leander breath;
Thou leddest Orpheus through the gleams of death;
Thou madest Pluto bear thin element:
And now, O winged Chieftain! thou hast sent
A moon-beam to the deep, deep water-world,
To find Endymion.

On gold sand impearl'd
With lily shells, and pebbles milky white,
Poor Cynthia grected him, and soothed her light
Against his pallid face: he felt the charm
To breathlessness, and suddenly a warm
Of his heart's blood: 't was very sweet; he stay'd
His wandering steps, and half-entranced laid
His head upon a tuft of straggling weeds,
To taste the gentle moon, and freshening beads,
Lashed from the crystal roof by fishes' tails.
And so he kept, until the rosy veils
Mantling the east, by Aurora's peering hand
Were lifted from the water's breast, and fann'd
Into sweet air; and sober'd morning came
Meekly through billows:—when like taper-flame
Left sudden by a dallying breath of air,
He rose in silence, and once more 'gan fare
Along his fated way.

Far had he roam'd,
With nothing save the hollow vast, that foam'd
Above, around, and at his feet; save things
More dead than Morpheus' imaginings:
Old rusted anchors, helmets, breast-plates large
Of gone sea-warriors; brazen beaks and targe;
Rudders that for a hundred years had lost
The sway of human hand; gold vase emboss'd
With long-forgotten story, and wherein
No reveller had ever dipp'd a chin
But those of Saturn's vintage; mouldering scrolls,
Writ in the tongue of heaven, by those souls
Who first were on the earth; and sculptures rude
In ponderous stone, developing the mood
Of ancient Nox;—then skeletons of man,
Of beast, behemoth, and leviathan,
And elephant, and eagle, and huge jaw
Of nameless monster. A cold leaden awe
These secrets struck into him; and unless
Dian had chaced away that heaviness,
He might have died: but now, with cheered feel,
He onward kept; wooing these thoughts to steal
About the labyrinth in his soul of love.

"What is there in thee, Moon! that thou shouldst move
My heart so potently? When yet a child
I oft have dried my tears when thou hast smiled.
Thou seem'dst my sister: hand in hand we went
From eve to morn across the firmament.
No apples would I gather from the tree,
Till thou hadst cool'd their cheeks deliciously:
No tumbling water ever spake romance,
But when my eyes with thine thereon could dance:
No woods were green enough, no bower divine,
Until thou lifted'st up thine eyelids fine:
In sowing-time ne'er would I dibble take,
Or drop a seed, till thou wast wide awake;
And, in the summer-tide of blossoming,
No one but thee hath heard me blithely sing
And mesh my dewy flowers all the night.
No melody was like a passing spright
If it went not to solemnize thy reign.
Yes, in my boyhood, every joy and pain
By thee were fashion'd to the self-same end;
And as I grew in years, still didst thou blend
With all my ardours: thou wast the deep glen;
Thou wast the mountain-top—the sage's pen—
The poet's harp—the voice of friends—the sun;
Thou wast the river—thou wast glory won;
Thou wast my clarion's blast—thou wast my steed—
My goblet full of wine—my topmost deed:—
Thou wast the charm of women, lovely Moon!
O what a wild and harmonized tune
My spirit struck from all the beautiful!
On some bright essence could I lean, and lull
Myself to immortality: I prest
Nature's soft pillow in a wakeful rest.
But, gentle Orb! there came a nearer bliss—
My strange love came—Felicity's abyss!
She came, and thou didst fade, and fade away—
Yet not entirely; no, thy starry sway
Has been an under-passion to this hour.
Now I begin to feel thine orby power

Is coming fresh upon me: O be kind!
Keep back thine influence, and do not blind
My sovereign vision.—Dearest love, forgive
That I can think away from thee and live!—
Pardon me, airy planet, that I prize
One thought beyond thine argent luxuries!
How far beyond!» At this a surprised start
Frosted the springing verdure of his heart;
For as he lifted up his eyes to swear
How his own goddess was past all things fair,
He saw far in the concave green of the sea
An old man sitting calm and peacefully.
Upon a weeded rock this old man sat,
And his white hair was awful, and a mat
Of weeds were cold beneath his cold thin feet;
And, ample as the largest winding-sheet,
A cloak of blue wrapp'd up his aged bones,
O'erwrought with symbols by the deepest groans
Of ambitious magic: every ocean-form
Was woven in with black distinctness; storm,
And calm, and whispering, and hideous roar
Were emblem'd in the woof; with every shape
That skims, or dives, or sleeps, 'twixt cape and cape.
The gulfing whale was like a dot in the spell,
Yet look upon it, and 't would size and swell
To its huge self; and the minutest fish
Would pass the very hardest gazer's wish,
And show his little eye's anatomy.
Then there was pictured the regality
Of Neptune; and the sea-nymphs round his state,
In beauteous vassalage, look up and wait.
Beside this old man lay a pearly wand,
And in his lap a book, the which he conn'd
So stedfastly, that the new denizen
Had time to keep him in amazed ken,
To mark these shadowings, and stand in awe.

The old man raised his hoary head and saw
The wilder'd stranger—seeming not to see,
His features were so lifeless. Suddenly
He woke as from a trance; his snow-white brows
Went arching up, and like two magic ploughs
Furrow'd deep wrinkles in his forehead large,
Which kept as fixedly as rocky marge,
Till round his wither'd lips had gone a smile.
Then up he rose, like one whose tedious toil
Had watch'd for years in forlorn hermitage,
Who had not from mid-life to utmost age
Eased in one accent his o'er-burden'd soul,
Even to the trees. He rose: he grasp'd his stole,
With convulsed clenches waving it abroad,
And in a voice of solemn joy, that awed
Echo into oblivion, he said:—

« Thou art the man! Now shall I lay my head
In peace upon my watery pillow: now
Sleep will come smoothly to my weary brow.
O Jove! I shall be young again, be young!
O shell-borne Neptune, I am pierced and stung
With new-born life! What shall I do? Where go,
When I have cast this serpent-skin of woe?—
I 'll swim to the syrens, and one moment listen
Their melodies, and see their long hair glisten;
Anon upon that giant's arm I 'll be,
That writhes about the roots of Sicily:
To northern seas I 'll in a twinkling sail,
And mount upon the snortings of a whale
To some black cloud; thence down I 'll madly sweep
On forked lightning, to the deepest deep,
Where through some sucking pool I will be hurl'd
With rapture to the other side of the world!
O, I am full of gladness! Sisters three,
I bow full-hearted to your old decree!
Yes, every god be thank'd, and power benign,
For I no more shall wither, droop, and pine.
Thou art the man!» Endymion started back
Dismay'd; and, like a wretch from whom the rack
Tortures hot breath, and speech of agony,
Mutter'd: « What lonely death am I to die
In this cold region? Will he let me freeze,
And float my brittle limbs o'er polar seas?
Or will he touch me with his searing hand,
And leave a black memorial on the sand?
Or tear me piece-meal with a bony saw,
And keep me as a chosen food to draw
His magian fish through hated fire and flame?
O misery of hell! resistless, tame,
Am I to be burnt up? No, I will shout,
Until the gods through heaven's blue look out!—
O Tartarus! but some few days agone
Her soft arms were entwining me, and on
Her voice I hung like fruit among green leaves:
Her lips were all my own, and—ah, ripe sheaves
Of happiness! ye on the stubble droop,
But never may be garner'd. I must stoop
My head, and kiss death's foot. Love! love, farewell!
Is there no hope from thee? This horrid spell
Would melt at thy sweet breath.—By Dian's hind
Feeding from her white fingers, on the wind
I see thy streaming hair! and now, by Pan,
I care not for this old mysterious man!»

He spake, and walking to that aged form,
Look'd high defiance. Lo! his heart 'gan warm
With pity, for the grey-hair'd creature wept.
Had he then wrong'd a heart where sorrow kept?
Had he, though blindly contumelious, brought
Rheum to kind eyes, a sting to human thought,
Convulsion to a mouth of many years?
He had in truth; and he was ripe for tears.
The penitent shower fell, as down he knelt
Before that care-worn sage, who trembling felt
About his large dark locks, and faultering spake:

« Arise, good youth, for sacred Phœbus' sake!
I know thine inmost bosom, and I feel
A very brother's yearning for thee steal
Into mine own: for why? thou openest
The prison-gates that have so long opprest
My weary watching. Though thou knowst it not,
Thou art commission'd to this fated spot
For great enfranchisement. O weep no more;
I am a friend to love, to loves of yore:
Aye, hadst thou never loved an unknown power,
I had been grieving at this joyous hour.
But even now most miserable old,
I saw thee, and my blood no longer cold
Gave mighty pulses: in this tottering case
Grew a new heart, which at this moment plays
As dancingly as thine. Be not afraid,
For thou shalt hear this secret all display'd,

Now as we speed towards our joyous task."

So saying, this young soul in age's mask
Went forward with the Carian side by side:
Resuming quickly thus; while ocean's tide
Hung swollen at their backs, and jewel'd sands
Took silently their foot-prints.

"My soul stands
Now past the midway from mortality,
And so I can prepare without a sigh
To tell thee briefly all my joy and pain.
I was a fisher once, upon this main,
And my boat danced in every creek and bay;
Rough billows were my home by night and day,—
The sea-gulls not more constant; for I had
No housing from the storm and tempests mad,
But hollow rocks,—and they were palaces
Of silent happiness, of slumberous ease:
Long years of misery have told me so.
Aye, thus it was one thousand years ago.
One thousand years!—Is it then possible
To look so plainly through them? to dispel
A thousand years with backward glance sublime?
To breathe away as 't were all scummy slime
From off a crystal pool, to see its deep,
And one's own image from the bottom peep?
Yes: now I am no longer wretched thrall,
My long captivity and moanings all
Are but a slime, a thin-pervading scum,
The which I breathe away, and thronging come
Like things of yesterday my youthful pleasures.

"I touch'd no lute, I sang not, trod no measures:
I was a lonely youth on desert shores.
My sports were lonely, 'mid continuous roars,
And craggy isles, and sea-mew's plaintive cry
Plaining discrepant between sea and sky.
Dolphins were still my play-mates; shapes unseen
Would let me feel their scales of gold and green,
Nor be my desolation; and, full oft,
When a dread water-spout had rear'd aloft
Its hungry hugeness, seeming ready ripe
To burst with hoarsest thunderings, and wipe
My life away like a vast sponge of fate,
Some friendly monster, pitying my sad state,
Has dived to its foundations, gulf'd it down,
And left me tossing safely. But the crown
Of all my life was utmost quietude:
More did I love to lie in cavern rude,
Keeping in wait whole days for Neptune's voice,
And if it came at last, hark, and rejoice!
There blush'd no summer eve but I would steer
My skiff along green shelving coasts, to hear
The shepherd's pipe come clear from aery steep,
Mingled with ceaseless bleatings of his sheep:
And never was a day of summer shine,
But I beheld its birth upon the brine:
For I would watch all night to see unfold
Heaven's gates, and Æthon snort his morning gold
Wide o'er the swelling streams: and constantly
At brim of day-tide, on some grassy lea,
My nets would be spread out, and I at rest.
The poor folk of the sea-country I blest
With daily boon of fish most delicate:
They knew not whence this bounty, and elate
Would strew sweet flowers on a sterile beach.

"Why was I not contented? Wherefore reach
At things which, but for thee, O Latmian!
Had been my dreary death! Fool! I began
To feel distemper'd longings: to desire
The utmost privilege that ocean's sire
Could grant in benediction: to be free
Of all his kingdom. Long in misery
I wasted, ere in one extremest fit
I plunged for life or death. To interknit
One's senses with so dense a breathing stuff
Might seem a work of pain; so not enough
Can I admire how crystal-smooth it felt,
And buoyant round my limbs. At first I dwelt
Whole days and days in sheer astonishment;
Forgetful utterly of self-intent;
Moving but with the mighty ebb and flow.
Then, like a new-fledged bird that first doth show
His spreaded feathers to the morrow chill,
I tried in fear the pinions of my will.
'T was freedom! and at once I visited
The ceaseless wonders of this ocean-bed.
No need to tell thee of them, for I see
That thou hast been a witness—it must be
For these I know thou canst not feel a drouth,
By the melancholy corners of that mouth.
So I will in my story straightway pass
To more immediate matter. Woe, alas!
That love should be my bane! Ah, Scylla fair!
Why did door Glaucus ever—ever dare
To sue thee to his heart? Kind stranger-youth!
I loved her to the very white of truth,
And she would not conceive it. Timid thing!
She fled me swift as sea-bird on the wing,
Round every isle, and point, and promontory,
From where large Hercules wound up his story
Far as Egyptian Nile. My passion grew
The more, the more I saw her dainty hue
Gleam delicately through the azure clear:
Until 't was too fierce agony to bear;
And in that agony, across my grief
It flash'd, that Circe might find some relief—
Cruel enchantress! So above the water
I rear'd my head, and look'd for Phœbus' daughter.
Ææa's isle was wondering at the moon:—
It seem'd to whirl around me, and a swoon
Left me dead-drifting to that fatal power.

"When I awoke, 't was in a twilight bower;
Just when the light of morn, with hum of bees,
Stole through its verdurous matting of fresh trees.
How sweet, and sweeter! for I heard a lyre,
And over it a sighing voice expire.
It ceased—I caught light footsteps; and anon
The fairest face that morn e'er look'd upon
Push'd through a screen of roses. Starry Jove!
With tears, and smiles, and honey-words she wove
A net whose thraldom was more bliss than all
The range of flower'd Elysium. Thus did fall
The dew of her rich speech: "Ah! Art awake?
O let me hear thee speak, for Cupid's sake!
I am so oppress'd with joy! Why, I have shed
An urn of tears, as though thou wert cold dead;
And now I find thee living, I will pour
From these devoted eyes their silver store,

Until exhausted of the latest drop,
So it will pleasure thee, and force thee stop
Here, that I too may live: but if beyond
Such cool and sorrowful offerings, thou art fond
Of soothing warmth, of dalliance supreme;
If thou art ripe to taste a long love-dream;
If smiles, if dimples, tongues for ardour mute,
Hang in thy vision like a tempting fruit,
O let me pluck it for thee.» Thus she link'd
Her charming syllables, till indistinct
Their music came to my o'er-sweeten'd soul;
And then she hover'd over me, and stole
So near, that if no nearer it had been
This furrow'd visage thou hadst never seen.

« Young man of Latmos! thus particular
Am I, that thou mayst plainly see how far
This fierce temptation went: and thou mayst not
Exclaim, How then, was Scylla quite forgot?

« Who could resist? Who in this universe?
She did so breathe ambrosia; so immerse
My fine existence in a golden clime.
She took me like a child of suckling time,
And cradled me in roses. Thus condemn'd,
The current of my former life was stemm'd,
And to this arbitrary queen of sense
I bow'd a tranced vassal: nor would thence
Have moved, even though Amphion's heart had woo'd
Me back to Scylla o'er the billows rude.
For as Apollo each eve doth devise
A new appareling for western skies;
So every eve, nay every spendthrift hour
Shed balmy consciousness within that bower.
And I was free of haunts umbrageous;
Could wander in the mazy forest-house
Of squirrels, foxes shy, and antler'd deer,
And birds from coverts innermost and drear
Warbling for very joy mellifluous sorrow—
To me new-born delights!

« Now let me borrow,
For moments few, a temperament as stern
As Pluto's sceptre, that my words not burn
These uttering lips, while I in calm speech tell
How specious heaven was changed to real hell.

« One morn she left me sleeping: half awake
I sought for her smooth arms and lips, to slake
My greedy thirst with nectarous camel-draughts;
But she was gone. Whereat the barbed shafts
Of disappointment stuck in me so sore,
That out I ran and search'd the forest o'er.
Wandering about in pine and cedar gloom
Damp awe assail'd me; for there 'gan to boom
A sound of moan, an agony of sound,
Sepulchral from the distance all around.
Then came a conquering earth-thunder, and rumbled
That fierce complain to silence: while I stumbled
Down a precipitous path, as if impell'd.
I came to a dark valley.—Groanings swell'd
Poisonous about my ears, and louder grew,
The nearer I approach'd a flame's gaunt blue,
That glared before me through a thorny brake.
This fire, like the eye of gordian snake,
Bewitch'd me towards; and I soon was near
A sight too fearful for the feel of fear:
In thicket hid I cursed the haggard scene—
The banquet of my arms, my arbour queen,
Seated upon an uptorn forest root;
And all around her shapes, wizard and brute,
Laughing, and wailing, groveling, serpenting,
Showing tooth, tusk, and venom-bag, and sting!
O such deformities! Old Charon's self,
Should he give up awhile his penny pelf,
And take a dream 'mong rushes Stygian,
It could not be so phantasied. Fierce, wan,
And tyrannizing was the lady's look,
As over them a gnarled staff she shook.
Oft-times upon the sudden she laugh'd out,
And from a basket emptied to the rout
Clusters of grapes, the which they raven'd quick
And roar'd for more; with many a hungry lick
About their shaggy jaws. Avenging, slow,
Anon she took a branch of mistletoe,
And emptied on 't a black dull-gurgling phial:
Groan'd one and all, as if some piercing trial
Was sharpening for their pitiable bones.
She lifted up the charm: appealing groans
From their poor breasts went sueing to her ear
In vain; remorseless as an infant's bier
She whisk'd against their eyes the sooty oil.
Whereat was heard a noise of painful toil,
Increasing gradual to a tempest rage,
Shrieks, yells, and groans of torture-pilgrimage;
Until their grieved bodies 'gan to bloat
And puff from the tail's end to stifled throat:
Then was appalling silence: then a sight
More wildering than all that hoarse affright;
For the whole herd, as by a whirlwind writhen,
Went through the dismal air like one huge Python
Antagonizing Boreas,—and so vanish'd.
Yet there was not a breath of wind: she banish'd
These phantoms with a nod. Lo! from the dark
Came waggish fauns, and nymphs, and satyrs stark,
With dancing and loud revelry,—and went
Swifter than centaurs after rapine bent.—
Sighing an elephant appear'd and bow'd
Before the fierce witch, speaking thus aloud
In human accent: 'Potent goddess! chief
Of pains resistless! make my being brief,
Or let me from this heavy prison fly:
Or give me to the air, or let me die!
I sue not for my happy crown again;
I sue not for my phalanx on the plain;
I sue not for my lone, my widow'd wife:
I sue not for my ruddy drops of life,
My children fair, my lovely girls and boys!
I will forget them; I will pass these joys;
Ask nought so heavenward, so too—too high:
Only I pray, as fairest boon, to die,
Or be deliver'd from this cumbrous flesh,
From this gross, detestable, filthy mesh,
And merely given to the cold bleak air.
Have mercy, Goddess! Circe, feel my prayer!'

« That curst magician's name fell icy numb
Upon my wild conjecturing: truth had come
Naked and sabre-like against my heart.
I saw a fury whetting a death-dart;

And my slain spirit, overwrought with fright,
Fainted away in that dark lair of night.
Think, my deliverer, how desolate
My waking must have been! disgust, and hate,
And terrors manifold divided me
A spoil amongst them. I prepared to flee
Into the dungeon core of that wild wood:
I fled three days—when lo! before me stood
Glaring the angry witch. O Dis, even now,
A clammy dew is beading on my brow,
At mere remembering her pale laugh, and curse.
'Ha! ha! Sir Dainty! there must be a nurse
Made of rose-leaves and thistle-down, express,
To cradle thee, my sweet, and lull thee: yes,
I am too flinty-hard for thy nice touch:
My tenderest squeeze is but a giant's clutch.
So, fairy-thing, it shall have lullabies
Unheard of yet; and it shall still its cries
Upon some breast more lily-feminine.
Oh, no—it shall not pine, and pine, and pine
More than one pretty, trifling thousand years;
And then 't were pity, but fate's gentle shears
Cut short its immortality. Sea-flirt!
Young dove of the waters! truly I 'll not hurt
One hair of thine: see how I weep and sigh,
That our heart-broken parting is so nigh.
And must we part? Ah, yes, it must be so.
Yet ere thou leavest me in utter woe,
Let me sob over thee my last adieus,
And speak a blessing: Mark me! Thou hast thews
Immortal, for thou art of heavenly race:
But such a love is mine, that here I chase
Eternally away from thee all bloom
Of youth, and destine thee towards a tomb.
Hence shalt thou quickly to the watery vast;
And there, ere many days be overpast,
Disabled age shall seize thee; and even then
Thou shalt not go the way of aged men;
But live and wither, cripple and still breathe
Ten hundred years: which gone, I then bequeath
Thy fragile bones to unknown burial.
Adieu, sweet love, adieu!'—As shot stars fall,
She fled ere I could groan for mercy. Stung
And poison'd was my spirit: despair sung
A war-song of defiance 'gainst all hell.
A hand was at my shoulder to compel
My sullen steps; another 'fore my eyes
Moved on with pointed finger. In this guise
Enforced, at the last by ocean's foam
I found me; by my fresh, my native home,
Its tempering coolness, to my life akin,
Came salutary as I waded in;
And, with a blind voluptuous rage, I gave
Battle to the swollen billow-ridge, and drave
Large froth before me, while there yet remain'd
Hale strength, nor from my bones all marrow drain'd.

« Young lover, I must weep—such hellish spite
With dry cheek who can tell? While thus my might
Proving upon this element, dismay'd,
Upon a dead thing's face my hand I laid;
I look'd—'t was Scylla! Cursed, cursed Circe!
O vulture-witch, hast never heard of mercy!
Could not thy harshest vengeance be content,
But thou must nip this tender innocent
Because I loved her?—Cold, O cold indeed
Were her fair limbs, and like a common weed
The sea-swell took her hair. Dead as she was
I clung about her waist, nor ceased to pass
Fleet as an arrow through unfathom'd brine,
Until there shone a fabric crystalline,
Ribb'd and inlaid with coral, pebble, and pearl.
Headlong I darted; at one eager swirl
Gain'd its bright portal, enter'd, and behold!
'T was vast, and desolate, and icy-cold;
And all around—But wherefore this to thee
Who in few minutes more thyself shalt see?—
I left poor Scylla in a niche and fled.
My fever'd parchings up, my scathing dread
Met palsy half way: soon these limbs became
Gaunt, wither'd, sapless, feeble, cramp'd, and lame.

« Now let me pass a cruel, cruel space,
Without one hope, without one faintest trace
Of mitigation, or redeeming bubble
Of colour'd phantasy; for I fear 't would trouble
Thy brain to loss of reason: and next tell
How a restoring chance came down to quell
One half of the witch in me.

« On a day,
Sitting upon a rock above the spray,
I saw grow up from the horizon's brink
A gallant vessel: soon she seem'd to sink
Away from me again, as though her course
Had been resumed in spite of hindering force—
So vanish'd: and not long, before arose
Dark clouds, and muttering of winds morose.
Old Eolus would stifle his mad spleen,
But could not: therefore all the billows green
Toss'd up the silver spume against the clouds.
The tempest came: I saw that vessel's shrouds
In perilous bustle; while upon the deck
Stood trembling creatures. I beheld the wreck;
The final gulfing; the poor struggling souls:
I heard their cries amid loud thunder-rolls.
O they had all been saved but crazed eld
Annull'd my vigorous cravings: and thus quell'd
And curb'd, think on 't, O Latmian! did I sit
Writhing with pity, and a cursing fit
Against that hell-born Circe. The crew had gone,
By one and one, to pale oblivion;
And I was gazing on the surges prone,
With many a scalding tear and many a groan,
When at my feet emerged an old man's hand,
Grasping this scroll, and this same slender wand.
I knelt with pain—reach'd out my hand—had grasp'd
These treasures—touch'd the knuckles—they unclasp'd—
I caught a finger: but the downward weight
O'erpower'd me—it sank. Then 'gan abate
The storm, and through chill anguish gloom outburst
The comfortable sun. I was athirst
To search the book, and in the warming air
Parted its dripping leaves with eager care.
Strange matters did it treat of, and drew on
My soul page after page, till well-nigh won
Into forgetfulness; when, stupified,
I read these words, and read again, and tried
My eyes against the heavens, and read again.
O what a load of misery and pain

Each Atlas-line bore off!—a shine of hope
Came gold around me, cheering me to cope
Strenuous with hellish tyranny. Attend!
For thou hast brought their promise to an end.

« 'In the wide sea there lives a forlorn wretch,
Doom'd with enfeebled carease to outstreteh
His loathed existenee through ten eenturies,
And then to die alone. Who ean devise
A total opposition? No one. So
One million times oeean must ebb and flow,
And he oppress'd. Yet he shall not die,
These things aceomplish'd :—If he utterly
Scans all the depths of magic, and expounds
The meanings of all motions, shapes, and sounds;
If he explores all forms and substanees
Straight homeward to their symbol-essences;
He shall not die. Moreover, and in chief,
He must pursue this task of joy and grief
Most piously;—all lovers tempest-tost,
And in the savage overwhelming lost,
He shall deposit side by side, until
Time's creeping shall the dreary space fulfil:
Whieh done, and all these labours ripened,
A youth, by heavenly power loved and led,
Shall stand before him; whom he shall direet
How to eonsummate all. The youth eleet
Must do the thing, or both will be destroy'd.' »—

« Then,» eried the young Endymion, overjoy'd,
« We are twin brothers in this destiny!
Say, I intreat thee, what achievement high
Is, in this restless world, for me reserved.
What! if from thee my wandering feet had swerved,
Had we both perish'd?»—« Look!» the sage replied,
« Dost thou not mark a gleaming through the tide,
Of divers brillianees? 't is the edifice
I told thee of, where lovely Scylla lies;
And where I have enshrined piously
All lovers, whom fell storms have doom'd to die
Throughout my bondage.» Thus discoursing, on
They went till unobscured the porches shone;
Which hurryingly they gain'd, and enter'd straight.
Sure never sinee king Neptune held his state
Was seen sueh wonder underneath the stars.
Turn to some level plain where haughty Mars
Has legion'd all his battle; and behold
How every soldier, with firm foot, doth hold
His even breast: see, many steeled squares,
And rigid ranks of iron—whenee who dares
One step? Imagine further, line by line,
These warrior thousands on the field supine:—
So in that erystal plaee, in silent rows,
Poor lovers lay at rest from joys and woes.—
The stranger from the mountains, breathless, traced
Such thousands of shut eyes in order plaeed;
Sueh ranges of white feet, and patient lips
All ruddy,—for here death no blossom nips.
He mark'd their brows and foreheads; saw their hair
Put sleekly on one side with nieest care;
And each one's gentle wrists, with reverence,
Put cross-wise to its heart.

« Let us commence
(Whisper'd the guide, stuttering with joy) even now.»
He spake, and, trembling like an aspen-bough,
Began to tear his scroll in pieees small,
Uttering the while some mumblings funeral.
He tore it into pieees small as snow
That drifts unfeather'd when bleak northerns blow;
And having done it, took his dark blue cloak
And bound it round Endymion: then struek
His wand against the empty air times nine.—
« What more there is to do, young man, is thine:
But first a little patience; first undo
This tangled thread, and wind it to a eine.
Ah, gentle! 't is as weak as spider's skein;
And shouldst thou break it—What, is it done so elean?
A power overshadows thee! Oh, brave!
The spite of hell is tumbling to its grave.
Here is a shell; 't is pearly blank to me,
Nor mark'd with any sign or eharactery—
Canst thou read aught? O read for pity's sake!
Olympus! we are safe! Now, Carian, break
This wand against yon lyre on the pedestal.»

'T was done: and straight with sudden swell and fall
Sweet music breathed her soul away, and sigh'd
A lullaby to silenee.—« Youth! now strew
These mineed leaves on me, and passing through
Those files of dead, scatter the same around,
And thou wilt see the issue.»—'Mid the sound
Of flutes and viols, ravishing his heart,
Endymion from Glaueus stood apart,
And seatter'd in his faee some fragments light.
How lightning-swift the change! a youthful wight
Smiling beneath a eoral diadem,
Out-sparkling sudden like an upturn'd gem,
Appear'd, and, stepping to a beauteous corse,
Kneel'd down beside it, and with tenderest force
Press'd its eold hand, and wept,—and Seylla sigh'd!
Endymion, with quick hand, the charm applied—
The nymph arose: he left them to their joy,
And onward went upon his high employ,
Showering those powerful fragments on the dead.
And, as he pass'd, each lifted up its head,
As doth a flower at Apollo's toueh.
Death felt it to his inwards; 't was too much:
Death fell a-weeping in his charnel-house.
The Latmian persevered along, and thus
All were re-animated. There arose
A noise of harmony, pulses and throes
Of gladness in the air—while many, who
Had died in mutual arms devout and true,
Sprang to each other madly; and the rest
Felt a high certainty of being blest.
They gazed upon Endymion. Enchantment
Grew drunken, and would have its head and bent.
Delicious symphonies, like airy flowers,
Budded, and swell'd, and, full-blown, shed full showers
Of light, soft, unseen leaves of sounds divine.
The two deliverers tasted a pure wine
Of happiness, from fairy-press oozed out.
Speeehless they eyed each other, and about
The fair assembly wander'd to and fro,
Distraeted with the riehest overflow
Of joy that ever pour'd from heaven.

——« Away!»
Shouted the new-born god; « Follow, and pay
Our piety to Neptunus supreme!»—
Then Scylla, blushing sweetly from her dream,

They led on first, bent to her meek surprise,
Through portal columns of a giant size
Into the vaulted, boundless emerald.
Joyous all follow'd, as the leader call'd,
Down marble steps; pouring as easily
As hour-glass sand,—and fast, as you might see
Swallows obeying the south summer's call,
Or swans upon a gentle waterfall.

Thus went that beautiful multitude, nor far,
Ere from among some rocks of glittering spar,
Just within ken, they saw descending thick
Another multitude. Whereat more quick
Moved either host. On a wide sand they met,
And of those numbers every eye was wet;
For each their old love found. A murmuring rose,
Like what was never heard in all the throes
Of wind and waters: 't is past human wit
To tell; 't is dizziness to think of it.

This mighty consummation made, the host
Moved on for many a league; and gain'd, and lost
Huge sea-marks; vanward swelling in array,
And from the rear diminishing away,—
Till a faint dawn surprised them. Glaucus cried,
« Behold! behold, the palace of his pride!
God Neptune's palaces!» With noice increased,
They shoulder'd on towards that brightening east.
At every onward step proud domes arose
In prospect,—diamond gleams and golden glows
Of amber 'gainst their faces levelling.
Joyous, and many as the leaves in spring,
Still onward; still the splendour gradual swell'd.
Rich opal domes where seen, on high upheld
By jasper pillars, letting through their shafts
A blush of coral. Copious wonder-draughts
Each gazer drank; and deeper drank more near:
For what poor mortals fragment up, as mere
As marble was there lavish, to the vast
Of one fair palace, that far far surpass'd,
Even for common bulk, those olden three,
Memphis, and Babylon, and Nineveh.

As large, as bright, as colour'd as the bow
Of Iris, when unfading it doth show
Beyond a silvery shower, was the arch
Through which this Paphian army took its march,
Into the outer courts of Neptune's state:
Whence could be seen, direct, a golden gate,
To which the leaders sped; but not half raught
Ere it burst open swift as fairy thought,
And made those dazzled thousands veil their eyes
Like callow eagles at the first sunrise.
Soon with an eagle nativeness their gaze
Ripe from hue-golden swoons took all the blaze,
And then, behold! large Neptune on his throne
Of emerald deep: yet not exalt alone;
At his right hand stood winged Love, and on
His left sat smiling Beauty's paragon.

Far as the mariner on highest mast
Can see all round upon the calmed vast,
So wide was Neptune's hall: and as the blue
Doth vault the waters, so the waters drew
Their doming curtains, high, magnificent,
Awed from the throne aloof;—and when storm-rent
Disclosed the thunder-gloomings in Jove's air;
But soothed as now, flash'd sudden everywhere,
Noiseless, sub-marine cloudlets, glittering
Death to a human eye: for there did spring
From natural west, and east, and south, and north,
A light as of four sunsets, blazing forth
A gold-green zenith 'bove the Sea-God's head.
Of lucid depth the floor, and far outspread
As breezeless lake, on which the slim canoe
Of feather'd Indian darts about, as through
The delicatest air: air verily,
But for the portraiture of clouds and sky:
This palace floor breath-air,—but for the amaze
Of deep-seen wonders motionless,—and blaze
Of the dome pomp, reflected in extremes,
Globing a golden sphere.

They stood in dreams
Till Triton blew his horn. The palace rang;
The Nereids danced; the Syrens faintly sang;
And the great Sea-King bow'd his dripping head.
Then Love took wing, and from his pinions shed
On all the multitude a nectarous dew.
The ooze-born Goddess beckon'd and drew
Fair Scylla and her guides to conference;
And when they reach'd the throned eminence
She kist the sea-nymph's cheek,—who sat her down
A toying with the doves. Then,—« Mighty crown
And sceptre of this kingdom!» Venus said,
« Thy vows were on a time to Nais paid:
Behold!»—Two copious tear drops instant fell
From the God's large eyes; he smiled delectable,
And over Glaucus held his blessing hands.—
« Endymion! Ah! still wandering in the bands
Of love? Now this is cruel. Since the hour
I met thee in earth's bosom, all my power
Have I put forth to serve thee. What, not yet
Escaped from dull mortality's harsh net?
A little patience, youth! 't will not be long,
Or I am skilless quite: an idle tongue,
A humid eye, and steps luxurious,
Where these are new and strange, are ominous.
Aye I have seen these signs in one of heaven,
When others were all blind; and were I given
To utter secrets, haply I might say
Some pleasant words: but Love will have his day.
So wait awhile expectant. Pr'ythee soon,
Even in the passing of thine honey-moon,
Visit my Cytherea: thou wilt find
Cupid well-natured, my Adonis kind;
And pray persuade with thee—Ah, I have done,
All blisses be upon thee, my sweet son!»—
Thus the fair goddess: while Endymion
Knelt to receive those accents halcyon.

Meantime a glorious revelry began
Before the Water-Monarch. Nectar ran
In courteous fountains to all cups outreach'd;
And plunder'd vines, teeming exhaustless, pleach'd
New growth about each shell and pendent lyre;
The which, in entangling for their fire,
Pull'd down fresh foliage and coverture
For dainty toy. Cupid, empire-sure,
Flutter'd and laugh'd, and oft-times through the throng
Made a delighted way. Then dance, and song,
And garlanding grew wild; and pleasure reign'd.
In harmless tendril they each other chain'd,

And strove who should be smother'd deepest in
Fresh crush of leaves.

O 't is a very sin
For one so weak to venture his poor verse
In such a place as this. O do not curse,
High Muses! let him hurry to the ending.

All suddenly were silent. A soft blending
Of dulcet instruments came charmingly;
And then a hymn.

« King of the stormy sea!
Brother of Jove, and co-inheritor
Of elements! Eternally before
Thee the waves awful bow. Fast, stubborn rock,
At thy fear'd trident shrinking, doth unlock
Its deep foundations, hissing into foam.
All mountain-rivers lost, in the wide home
Of thy capacious bosom ever flow.
Thou frownest, and old Eolus thy foe
Skulks to his cavern, 'mid the gruff complaint
Of all his rebel tempests. Dark clouds faint
When, from thy diadem, a silver gleam
Slants over blue dominion. Thy bright team
Gulfs in the morning light, and scuds along
To bring thee nearer to that golden song
Apollo singeth, while his chariot
Waits at the doors of heaven. Thou art not
For scenes like this: an empire stern hast thou;
And it hath furrow'd that large front: yet now,
As newly come of heaven, dost thou sit
To blend and interknit
Subdued majesty with this glad time.
O shell-borne King sublime!
We lay our hearts before thee evermore—
We sing, and we adore!

« Breathe softly, flutes;
Be tender of your strings, ye soothing lutes;
Nor be the trumpet heard! O vain, O vain!
Not flowers budding in an April rain,
Nor breath of sleeping dove, nor river's flow,—
No, nor the Eolian twang of Love's own bow,
Can mingle music fit for the soft ear
Of goddess Cytherea!
Yet deign, white Queen of Beauty, thy fair eyes
On our souls' sacrifice.

« Bright-wing'd Child!
Who has another care when thou hast smiled?
Unfortunates on earth, we see at last
All death-shadows, and glooms that overcast
Our spirits, fann'd away by thy light pinions.
O sweetest essence! sweetest of all minions!
God of warm pulses, and dishevell'd hair,
And panting bosoms bare!
Dear unseen light in darkness! eclipser
Of light in light! delicious poisoner!
Thy venom'd goblet will we quaff until
We fill—we fill!
And by thy Mother's lips———»

Was heard no more
For clamour, when the golden palace-door
Open'd again, and from without, in shone
A new magnificence. On oozy throne
Smooth-moving came Oceanus the old,
To take a latest glimpse at his sheep-fold,
Before he went into his quiet cave
To muse for ever—Then a lucid wave,
Scoop'd from its trembling sisters of mid-sea,
Afloat, and pillowing up the majesty
Of Doris, and the Egean seer, her spouse—
Next, on a dolphin, clad in laurel boughs,
Theban Amphion leaning on his lute:
His fingers went across it—All were mute
To gaze on Amphitrite, queen of pearls,
And Thetis pearly too.—

The palace whirls
Around giddy Endymion; seeing he
Was there far strayed from mortality.
He could not bear it—shut his eyes in vain;
Imagination gave a dizzier pain.
« O I shall die! sweet Venus, be my stay!
Where is my lovely mistress? Well-away!
I die—I hear her voice—I feel my wing—»
At Neptune's feet he sank. A sudden ring
Of Nereids were about him, in kind strife
To usher back his spirit into life:
But still he slept. At last they interwove
Their cradling arms, and purposed to convey
Towards a crystal bower far away.

Lo! while slow carried through the pitying crowd,
To his inward senses these words spake aloud;
Written in star-light on the dark above:
« Dearest Endymion! my entire love!
How have I dwelt in fear of fate: 't is done—
Immortal bliss for me too hast thou won.
Arise then! for the hen-dove shall not hatch
Her ready eggs, before I 'll kissing snatch
Thee into endless heaven. Awake! awake!»

The youth at once arose: a placid lake
Came quiet to his eyes; and forest green,
Cooler than all the wonder he had seen,
Lull'd with its simple song his fluttering breast.
How happy once again in grassy nest!

BOOK IV.

Muse of my native land! loftiest Muse!
O first-born on the mountains! by the hues
Of heaven on the spiritual air begot:
Long didst thou sit alone in northern grot,
While yet our England was a wolfish den;
Before our forests heard the talk of men;
Before the first of Druids was a child;—
Long didst thou sit amid our regions wild,
Rapt in a deep prophetic solitude.
There came an eastern voice of solemn mood:—
Yet wast thou patient. Then sang forth the Nine,
Apollo's garland:—yet didst thou divine
Such home-bred glory, that they cried in vain,
« Come hither, Sister of the Island!» Plain
Spake fair Ausonia; and once more she spake
A higher summons:—still didst thou betake

Thee to thy native hopes. O thou hast won
A full accomplishment! The thing is done,
Which undone, these our latter days had risen
On barren souls. Great Muse, thou know'st what prison,
Of flesh and bone, curbs, and confines, and frets
Our spirit's wings: despondency besets
Our pillows; and the fresh to-morrow morn
Seems to give forth its light in very scorn
Of our dull, uninspired, snail-paced lives.
Long have I said, how happy he who shrives
To thee! But then I thought on poets gone,
And could not pray:—nor can I now—so on
I move to the end in lowliness of heart.——

«Ah, woe is me! that I should fondly part
From my dear native land! Ah, foolish maid!
Glad was the hour, when, with thee, myriads bade
Adieu to Ganges and their pleasant fields!
To one so friendless the clear freshet yields
A bitter coolness; the ripe grape is sour:
Yet I would have, great gods! but one short hour
Of native air—let me but die at home.»

Endymion to heaven's airy dome
Was offering up a hecatomb of vows,
When these words reach'd him. Whereupon he bows
His head through thorny-green entanglement
Of underwood, and to the sound is bent,
Anxious as hind towards her hidden fawn.

«Is no one near to help me? No fair dawn
Of life from charitable voice? No sweet saying
To set my dull and sadden'd spirit playing?
No hand to toy with mine? No lips so sweet
That I may worship them? No eyelids meet
To twinkle on my bosom? No one dies
Before me, till from these enslaving eyes
Redemption sparkles!—I am sad and lost.»

Thou, Carian lord, hadst better have been tost
Into a whirlpool. Vanish into air,
Warm mountaineer! for canst thou only bear
A woman's sigh alone and in distress?
See not her charms! Is Phœbe passionless?
Phœbe is fairer far—O gaze no more:—
Yet if thou wilt behold all beauty's store,
Behold her panting in the forest grass!
Do not those curls of glossy jet surpass
For tenderness the arms so idly lain
Amongst them? Feelest not a kindred pain,
To see such lovely eyes in swimming search
After some warm delight, that seems to perch
Dovelike in the dim cell lying beyond
Their upper lids?—Hist!

«O for Hermes' wand,
To touch this flower into human shape!
That woodland Hyacinthus could escape
From his green prison, and here kneeling down
Call me his queen, his second life's fair crown!
Ah me, how I could love!—My soul doth melt
For the unhappy youth—Love! I have felt
So faint a kindness, such a meek surrender
To what my own full thoughts had made too tender,
That but for tears my life had fled away!—
Ye deaf and senseless minutes of the day,
And thou, old forest, hold ye this for true,
There is no lightning, no authentic dew
But in the eye of love: there 's not a sound,
Melodious howsoever, can confound
The heavens and earth in one to such a death
As doth the voice of love: there 's not a breath
Will mingle kindly with the meadow air,
Till it has panted round, and stolen a share
Of passion from the heart!»—

Upon a bough
He leant, wretched. He surely cannot now
Thirst for another love: O impious,
That he can even dream upon it thus!—
Thought he, «Why am I not as are the dead,
Since to a woe like this I have been led
Through the dark earth, and through the wondrous sea?
Goddess! I love thee not the less: from thee
By Juno's smile I turn not—no, no, no—
While the great waters are at ebb and flow.—
I have a triple soul! O fond pretence—
For both, for both my love is so immense,
I feel my heart is cut in twain for them.»

And so he groan'd, as one by beauty slain.
The lady's heart beat quick, and he could see
Her gentle bosom heave tumultuously.
He sprang from his green covert: there she lay,
Sweet as a musk-rose upon new-made hay;
With all her limbs on tremble, and her eyes
Shut softly up alive. To speak he tries:
«Fair damsel, pity me! forgive me that I
Thus violate thy bower's sanctity!
O pardon me, for I am full of grief—
Grief born of thee, young angel! fairest thief!
Who stolen hast away the wings wherewith
I was to top the heavens. Dear maid, sith
Thou art my executioner, and I feel
Loving and hatred, misery and weal,
Will in a few short hours be nothing to me,
And all my story that much passion slew me;
Do smile upon the evening of my days:
And, for my tortured brain begins to craze,
Be thou my nurse; and let me understand
How dying I shall kiss that lily hand.—
Dost weep for me? Then should I be content.
Scowl on, ye fates! until the firmament
Outblackens Erebus, and the full-cavern'd earth
Crumbles into itself. By the cloud girth
Of Jove, those tears have given me a thirst
To meet oblivion.»—As her heart would burst
The maiden sobb'd awhile, and then replied:
«Why must such desolation betide
As that thou speakest of? Are not these green nooks
Empty of all misfortune? Do the brooks
Utter a gorgon voice? Does yonder thrush,
Schooling its half-fledged little ones to brush
About the dewy forest, whisper tales?—
Speak not of grief, young stranger, or cold snails
Will slime the rose to-night. Though if thou wilt,
Methinks 't would be a guilt—a very guilt—
Not to companion thee, and sigh away
The light—the dusk—the dark—till break of day!»
«Dear lady,» said Endymion, «'t is past:
I love thee! and my days can never last.
That I may pass in patience still speak:
Let me have music dying, and I seek

No more delight—I bid adieu to all.
Didst thou not after other climates call,
And murmur about Indian streams?»—Then she,
Sitting beneath the midmost forest tree,
For pity sang this roundelay——

« O Sorrow!
Why dost borrow
The natural hue of health, from vermeil lips?—
To give maiden blushes
To the white rose bushes?
Or is it thy dewy hand the daisy tips?

« O Sorrow!
Why dost borrow
The lustrous passion from a falcon-eye?—
To give the glow-worm light?
Or, on a moonless night,
To tinge, on syren shores, the salt sea-spry?

« O Sorrow!
Why dost borrow
The mellow ditties from a mourning tongue?—
To give at evening pale
Unto the nightingale,
That thou mayst listen the cold dews among?

« O Sorrow!
Why dost borrow
Heart's lightness from the merriment of May?—
A lover would not tread
A cowslip on the head,
Though he should dance from eve till peep of day—
Nor any drooping flower
Held sacred for thy bower,
Wherever he may sport himself and play.

« To Sorrow
I bade good morrow,
And thought to leave her far away behind;
But cheerly, cheerly,
She loves me dearly;
She is so constant to me, and so kind:
I would deceive her,
And so leave her,
But ah! she is so constant and so kind.

« Beneath my palm-trees, by the river side,
I sat a weeping: in the whole world wide
There was no one to ask me why I wept,—
And so I kept
Brimming the water-lily cups with tears
Cold as my fears.

« Beneath my palm-trees, by the river side,
I sat a weeping: what enamour'd bride,
Cheated by shadowy wooer from the clouds,
But hides and shrouds
Beneath dark palm-trees by a river side?

« And as I sat, over the light blue hills
There came a noise of revellers: the rills
Into the wide stream came of purple hue—
'T was Bacchus and his crew!
The carnest trumpet spake, and silver thrills
From kissing cymbals made a merry din—
'T was Bacchus and his kin!
Like to a moving vintage down they came,
Crown'd with green leaves, and faces all on flame;
All madly dancing through the pleasant valley,
To scare thee, Melancholy!
O then, O then, thou wast a simple name!
And I forgot thee, as the berried holly
By shepherds is forgotten, when in June,
Tall chesnuts keep away the sun and moon:—
I rush'd into the folly!

« Within his car, aloft, young Bacchus stood,
Trifling his ivy-dart, in dancing mood,
With sidelong laughing;
And little rills of crimson wine imbrued
His plump white arms, and shoulders, enough white
For Venus' pearly bite;
And near him rode Silenus on his ass,
Pelted with flowers as he on did pass
Tipsily quaffing.

« Whence came ye, merry Damsels! whence came ye,
So many, and so many, and such glee?
Why have ye left your bowers desolate,
Your lutes, and gentler fate?
'We follow Bacchus! Bacchus on the wing,
A conquering!
Bacchus, young Bacchus! good or ill betide,
We dance before him thorough kingdoms wide:—
Come hither, lady fair, and joined be
To our wild minstrelsy!'

« Whence came ye, jolly Satyrs! whence came ye,
So many, and so many, and such glee?
Why have ye left your forest haunts, why left
Your nuts in oak-tree cleft?—
'For wine, for wine we left our kernel tree;
For wine we left our heath, and yellow brooms,
And cold mushrooms;
For wine we follow Bacchus through the earth;
Great god of breathless cups and chirping mirth!—
Come hither, lady fair, and joined be
To our mad minstrelsy!'

« Over wide streams and mountains great we went,
And, save when Bacchus kept his ivy tent,
Onward the tiger and the leopard pants,
With Asian elephants:
Onward these myriads—with song and dance,
With zebras striped, and sleek Arabians' prance,
Web-footed alligators, crocodiles,
Bearing upon their scaly backs, in files,
Plump infant laughers mimicking the coil
Of seamen, and stout galley-rowers' toil:
With toying oars and silken sails they glide,
Nor care for wind and tide.

« Mounted on panthers' furs and lions' manes,
From rear to van they scour about the plains;
A three days' journey in a moment done;
And always, at the rising of the sun,
About the wilds they hunt with spear and horn,
On spleenful unicorn.

« I saw Osirian Egypt kneel adown
Before the vine-wreath crown!

I saw parch'd Abyssinia rouse and sing
To the silver cymbals' ring!
I saw the whelming vintage hotly pierce
Old Tartary the fierce!
The kings of Ind their jewel-sceptres vail,
And from their treasures scatter pearled hail;
Great Brahma from his mystic heaven groans,
And all his priesthood moans,
Before young Bacchus' eye-wink turning pale.
Into these regions came I, following him,
Sick-hearted, weary—so I took a whim
To stray away into these forests drear,
Alone, without a peer:
And I have told thee all thou mayest hear.

"Young stranger!
I've been a ranger
In search of pleasure throughout every clime;
Alas! 't is not for me:
Bewitch'd I sure must be,
To lose in grieving all my maiden prime.

"Come then, Sorrow,
Sweetest Sorrow!
Like an own babe I nurse thee on my breast:
I thought to leave thee,
And deceive thee,
But now of all the world I love thee best.

"There is not one,
No, no, not one
But thee to comfort a poor lonely maid;
Thou art her mother,
And her brother,
Her playmate, and her wooer in the shade."

O what a sigh she gave in finishing,
And look, quite dead to every worldly thing!
Endymion could not speak, but gazed on her:
And listen'd to the wind that now did stir
About the crisped oaks full drearily,
Yet with as sweet a softness as might be
Remember'd from its velvet summer song.
At last he said: "Poor lady, how thus long
Have I been able to endure that voice?
Fair Melody! kind Syren! I 've no choice;
I must be thy sad servant evermore:
I cannot chuse but kneel here and adore.
Alas, I must not think—by Phœbe, no!
Let me not think, soft Angel! shall it be so?
Say, beautifullest, shall I never think?
O thou couldst foster me beyond the brink
Of recollection! make my watchful care
Close up its bloodshot eyes, nor see despair!
Do gently murder half my soul, and I
Shall feel the other half so utterly!—
I 'm giddy at that cheek so fair and smooth;
O let it blush so ever: let it soothe
My madness! let it mantle rosy-warm
With the tinge of love, panting in safe alarm.
This cannot be thy hand, and yet it is;
And this is sure thine other softling—this
Thine own fair bosom, and I am so near!
Wilt fall asleep? O let me sip that tear!
And whisper one sweet word that I may know
This is this world—sweet dewy blossom!"—Woe!
Woe! woe to that Endymion! Where is he?—
Even these words went echoing dismally
Through the wide forest—a most fearful tone,
Like one repenting in his latest moan;
And while it died away a shade pass'd by,
As of a thunder-cloud. When arrows fly
Through the thick branches, poor ring-doves sleek forth
Their timid necks and tremble; so these both
Leant to each other trembling, and sat so
Waiting for some destruction—when lo!
Foot-feather'd Mercury appear'd sublime
Beyond the tall tree tops; and in less time
Than shoots the slanted hail-storm, down he dropt
Towards the ground; but rested not, nor stopt
One moment from his home: only the sward
He with his wand light touch'd, and heavenward
Swifter than sight was gone—even before
The teeming earth a sudden witness bore
Of his swift magic. Diving swans appear
Above the crystal circlings white and clear;
And catch the cheated eye in wild surprise,
How they can dive in sight and unseen rise—
So from the turf outsprang two steeds jet-black,
Each with large dark blue wings upon his back.
The youth of Caria placed the lovely dame
On one, and felt himself in spleen to tame
The other's fierceness. Through the air they flew,
High as the eagles. Like two drops of dew
Exhaled to Phœbus' lips, away they are gone,
Far from the earth away—unseen, alone,
Among cool clouds and winds, but that the free,
The buoyant life of song can floating be
Above their heads, and follow them untired.
Muse of my native land! am I inspired?
This is the giddy air, and I must spread
Wide pinions to keep here; nor do I dread
Or height, or depth, or width, or any chance
Precipitous: I have beneath my glance
Those towering horses and their mournful freight.
Could I thus sail, and see, and thus await
Fearless for power of thought, without thine aid?—
There is a sleepy dusk, an odorous shade
From some approaching wonder, and behold
Those winged steeds, with snorting nostrils bold
Snuff at its faint extreme, and seem to tire,
Dying to embers from their native fire!

There curl'd a purple mist around them; soon,
It seem'd as when around the pale new moon
Sad Zephyr droops the clouds like weeping willow:
'T was Sleep slow journeying with head on pillow.
For the first time, since he came nigh dead-born
From the old womb of night, his cave forlorn
Had he left more forlorn; for the first time,
He felt aloof the day and morning's prime—
Because into his depth Cimmerian
There came a dream, showing how a young man,
Ere a lean bat could plump its wintery skin,
Would at high Jove's empyreal footstool win
An immortality, and how espouse
Jove's daughter, and be reckon'd of his house.
Now was he slumbering towards heaven's gate,
That he might at the threshold one hour wait
To hear the marriage melodies, and then
Sink downward to his dusky cave again.

His litter of smooth semilucent mist,
Diversely tinged with rose and amethyst,
Puzzled those eyes that for the centre sought;
And scarcely for one moment could be caught
His sluggish form reposing motionless.
Those two on winged steeds, with all the stress
Of vision search'd for him, as one would look
Athwart the sallows of a river nook
To catch a glance at silver-throated eels,—
Or from old Skiddaw's top, when fog conceals
His rugged forehead in a mantle pale,
With an eye-guess towards some pleasant vale,
Descry a favourite hamlet faint and far.

These raven horses, though they foster'd are
Of earth's splenetic fire, dully drop
Their full-vein'd ears, nostrils blood wide, and stop;
Upon the spiritless mist have they outspread
Their ample feathers, are in slumber dead,—
And on those pinions, level in mid-air,
Endymion sleepeth and the lady fair.
Slowly they sail, slowly as icy isle
Upon a calm sea drifting: and meanwhile
The mournful wanderer dreams. Behold! he walks
On heaven's pavement, brotherly he talks
To divine powers: from his hand full fain
Juno's proud birds are pecking pearly grain:
He tries the nerve of Phœbus' golden bow,
And asketh where the golden apples grow:
Upon his arm he braces Pallas' shield,
And strives in vain to unsettle and wield
A Jovian thunderbolt: arch Hebe brings
A full-brimm'd goblet, dances lightly, sings
And tantalizes long; at last he drinks,
And lost in pleasure at her feet he sinks,
Touching with dazzled lips her star-light hand,
He blows a bugle,—an etherial band
Are visible above: the Seasons four,—
Green-kyrtled Spring, flush Summer, golden store
In Autumn's sickle, Winter frosty hoar,
Join dance with shadowy Hours; while still the blast,
In swells unmitigated, still doth last
To sway their floating morris. "Whose is this?
Whose bugle?" he inquires: they smile—"O Dis!
Why is this mortal here? Dost thou not know
Its mistress' lips? Not thou?—'T is Dian's: lo!
She rises crescented!" He looks, 't is she,
His very goddess: good-bye earth, and sea,
And air, and pains, and care, and suffering;
Good-bye to all but love! Then doth he spring
Towards her, and awakes—and, strange, o'erhead,
Of those same fragrant exhalations bred,
Beheld awake his very dream: the gods
Stood smiling; merry Hebe laughs and nods;
And Phœbe bends towards him crescented.
O state perplexing! On the pinion bed,
Too well awake, he feels the panting side
Of his delicious lady. He who died
For soaring too audacious in the sun,
Where that same treacherous wax began to run,
Felt not more tongue-tied than Endymion.
His heart leapt up as to its rightful throne,
To that fair-shadow'd passion pulsed its way—
Ah, what perplexity! Ah, well-a-day!
So fond, so beauteous was his bed-fellow,
He could not help but kiss her: then he grew
Awhile forgetful of all beauty save
Young Phœbe's, golden-hair'd; and so 'gan crave
Forgiveness: yet he turn'd once more to look
At the sweet sleeper,—all his soul was shook,—
She press'd his hand in slumber; so once more
He could not help but kiss her and adore.
At this the shadow wept, melting away.
The Latmian started up: "Bright goddess, stay!
Search my most hidden breast! By truth's own tongue,
I have no dædale heart: why is it wrung
To desperation? Is there nought for me,
Upon the bourne of bliss, but misery?"

These words awoke the stranger of dark tresses:
Her dawning love-look rapt Endymion blesses
With 'haviour soft. Sleep yawn'd from underneath.
"Thou swan of Ganges, let us no more breathe
This murky phantasm! thou contented seem'st
Pillow'd in lovely idleness, nor dream'st
What horrors may discomfort thee and me.
Ah, shouldst thou die from my heart-treachery!—
Yet did she merely weep—her gentle soul
Hath no revenge in it; as it is whole
In tenderness, would I were whole in love!
Can I prize thee, fair maid, all price above,
Even when I feel as true as innocence?
I do, I do.—What is this soul then? Whence
Came it? It does not seem my own, and I
Have no self-passion or identity.
Some fearful end must be; where, where is it?
By Nemesis! I see my spirit flit
Alone about the dark—Forgive me, sweet!
Shall we away?" He roused the steeds; they beat
Their wings chivalrous into the clear air,
Leaving old Sleep within his vapoury lair.

The good-night blush of eve was waning slow,
And Vesper, risen star, began to throe
In the dusk heavens silvery, when they
Thus sprang direct towards the Galaxy.
Nor did speed hinder converse soft and strange—
Eternal oaths and vows they interchange,
In such wise, in such temper, so aloof
Up in the winds, beneath a starry roof,
So witless of their doom, that verily
'T is well nigh past man's search their hearts to see;
Whether they wept, or laugh'd, or grieved, or toy'd—
Most like with joy gone mad, with sorrow cloy'd.

Full facing their swift flight, from ebon streak,
The moon put forth a little diamond peak,
No bigger than an unobserved star,
Or tiny point of fairy scimetar;
Bright signal that she only stoop'd to tie
Her silver sandals, ere deliciously
She bow'd into the heavens her timid head.
Slowly she rose, as though she would have fled,
While to his lady meek the Carian turn'd,
To mark if her dark eyes had yet discern'd
This beauty in its birth—Despair! despair!
He saw her body fading gaunt and spare
In the cold moonshine. Straight he seized her wrist;
It melted from his grasp; her hand he kiss'd,
And, horror! kiss'd his own—he was alone.

Her steed a little higher soar'd, and then
Dropt hawkwise to the earth.

There lies a den,
Beyond the seeming confines of the space
Made for the soul to wander in and trace
Its own existence, of remotest glooms.
Dark regions are around it, where the tombs
Of buried griefs the spirit sees, but scarce
One hour doth linger weeping, for the pierce
Of new-born woe it feels more inly smart:
And in these regions many a venom'd dart
At random flies; they are the proper home
Of every ill: the man is yet to come
Who hath not journey'd in this native hell.
But few have ever felt how calm and well
Sleep may be had in that deep den of all.
There anguish does not sting, nor pleasure pall;
Woe-hurricanes beat ever at the gate,
Yet all is still within and desolate.
Beset with plainful gusts, within ye hear
No sound so loud as when on curtain'd bier
The death-watch tick is stifled. Enter none
Who strive therefore: on the sudden it is won.
Just when the sufferer begins to burn,
Then it is free to him; and from an urn,
Still fed by melting ice, he takes a draught—
Young Semele such richness never quaft
In her maternal longing. Happy gloom!
Dark Paradise! where pale becomes the bloom
Of health by due; where silence dreariest
Is most articulate; where hopes infest;
Where those eyes are the brightest far that keep
Their lids shut longest in a dreamless sleep.
O happy spirit-home! O wondrous soul!
Pregnant with such a den to save the whole
In thine own depth. Hail, gentle Carian!
For, never since thy griefs and woes began,
Hast thou felt so content: a grievous feud
Hath let thee to this Cave of Quietude.
Aye, his lull'd soul was there, although upborne
With dangerous speed: and so he did not mourn
Because he knew not whither he was going.
So happy was he, not the aerial blowing
Of trumpets at clear parley from the east
Could rouse from that fine relish, that high feast.
They stung the feather'd horse; with fierce alarm
He flapp'd towards the sound. Alas! no charm
Could lift Endymion's head, or he had view'd
A skyey mask, a pinion'd multitude,—
And silvery was its passing: voices sweet
Warbling the while as if to lull and greet
The wanderer in his path. Thus warbled they,
While past the vision went in bright array.

« Who, who from Dian's feast would be away?
For all the golden bowers of the day
Are empty left? Who, who away would be
From Cynthia's wedding and festivity?
Not Hesperus: lo! upon his silver wings
He leans away for highest heaven and sings,
Snapping his lucid fingers merrily!—
Ah, Zephyrus! art here, and Flora too!
Ye tender bibbers of the rain and dew,
Young playmates of the rose and daffodil,
Be careful, ere ye enter in, to fill
Your baskets high
With fennel green, and balm, and golden pines,
Savory, latter-mint, and columbines,
Cool parsley, basil sweet, and sunny thyme;
Yea, every flower and leaf of every clime,
All gather'd in the dewy morning: hie
Away! fly, fly!—
Crystalline brother of the belt of heaven,
Aquarius! to whom king Jove has given
Two liquid pulse streams 'stead of feather'd wings,
Two fan-like fountains,—thine illuminings
For Dian play:
Dissolve the frozen purity of air;
Let thy white shoulders silvery and bare
Show cold through watery pinions; make more bright
The Star-Queen's crescent on her marriage night:
Haste, haste away!
Castor has tamed the planet Lion, see!
And of the Bear has Pollux mastery:
A third is in the race! who is the third,
Speeding away swift as the eagle bird?
The ramping Centaur!
The Lion's mane 's on end: the Bear how fierce!
The Centaur's arrow ready seems to pierce
Some enemy: far forth his bow is bent
Into the blue of heaven. He 'll be shent,
Pale unrelentor,
When he shall hear the wedding lutes a playing.—
Andromeda! sweet woman! why delaying
So timidly among the stars: come hither!
Join this bright throng, and nimbly follow whither
They all are going.
Danae's Son, before Jove newly bow'd,
Has wept for thee, calling to Jove aloud.
Thee, gentle lady, did he disenthral:
Ye shall for ever live and love, for all
Thy tears are flowing.—
By Daphne's fright, behold Apollo!—»

More
Endymion heard not: down his steed him bore,
Prone to the green head of a misty hill.

His first touch of the earth went nigh to kill.
« Alas!» said he, « were I but always borne
Through dangerous winds, had but my footsteps worn
A path in hell, for ever would I bless
Horrors which nourish an uneasiness
For my own sullen conquering; to him
Who lives beyond earth's boundary, grief is dim,
Sorrow is but a shadow: now I see
The grass; I feel the solid ground—Ah, me!
It is thy voice—divinest! Where?—who? who
Left thee so quiet on this bed of dew?
Behold upon this happy earth we are;
Let us ay love each other; let us fare
On forest-fruits, and never, never go
Among the abodes of mortals here below,
Or be by phantoms duped. O destiny!
Into a labyrinth now my soul would fly,
But with thy beauty will I deaden it.
Where didst thou melt too? By thee will I sit
For ever: let our fate stop here—a kid
I on this spot will offer: Pan will bid
Us live in peace, in love and peace among
His forest wildernesses. I have clung

To nothing, loved a nothing, nothing seen
Or felt but a great dream! Oh, I have been
Presumptuous against love, against the sky,
Against all elements, against the tie
Of mortals each to each, against the blooms
Of flowers, rush of rivers, and the tombs
Of heroes gone! Against his proper glory
Has my own soul conspired: so my story
Will I to children utter, and repent.
There never lived a mortal man, who bent
His appetite beyond his natural sphere,
But starved and died. My sweetest Indian, here,
Here will I kneel, for thou redeemed hast
My life from too thin breathing: gone and past
Are cloudy phantasms. Caverns lone, farewell!
And air of visions, and the monstrous swell
Of visionary seas! No, never more
Shall airy voices cheat me to the shore
Of tangled wonder, breathless and aghast.
Adieu, my daintiest Dream! although so vast
My love is still for thee. The hour may come
When we shall meet in pure elysium.
On earth I may not love thee; and therefore
Doves will I offer up, and sweetest store
All through the teeming year: so thou wilt shine
On me, and on this damsel fair of mine,
And bless our simple lives. My Indian bliss!
My river-lily bud! one human kiss!
One sigh of real breath—one gentle squeeze,
Warm as a dove's nest among summer trees,
And warm with dew at ooze from living blood!
Whither didst melt? Ah, what of that!—all good
We'll talk about—no more of dreaming.—Now,
Where shall our dwelling be? Under the brow
Of some steep mossy hill, where ivy dun
Would hide us up, although spring leaves were none;
And where dark yew-trees, as we rustle through,
Will drop their scarlet-berry cups of dew?
O thou wouldst joy to live in such a place!
Dusk for our loves, yet light enough to grace
Those gentle limbs on mossy bed reclined:
For by one step the blue sky shouldst thou find,
And by another, in deep dell below,
See, through the trees, a little river go
All in its mid-day gold and glimmering.
Honey from out the gnarled hive I 'll bring,
And apples, wan with sweetness, gather thee,—
Cresses that grow where no man may them see,
And sorrel untorn by the dew-claw'd stag:
Pipes will I fashion of the syrinx flag,
That thou mayst always know whither I roam,
When it shall please thee in our quiet home
To listen and think of love. Still let me speak;
Still let me dive into the joy I seek,—
For yet the past doth prison me. The rill,
Thou haply mayst delight in, will I fill
With fairy fishes from the mountain tarn,
And thou shalt feed them from the squirrel's barn.
Its bottom will I strew with amber shells,
And pebbles blue from deep enchanted wells.
Its sides I 'll plant with dew-sweet eglantine,
And honeysuckles full of clear bee-wine.
I will entice this crystal rill to trace
Love's silver name upon the meadow's face.
I 'll kneel to Vesta, for a flame of fire;
And to god Phœbus, for a golden lyre;
To Empress Dian, for a hunting-spear;
To Vesper, for a taper silver-clear,
That I may see thy beauty through the night;
To Flora, and a nightingale shall light
Tame on thy finger; to the River-gods,
And they shall bring thee taper fishing-rods
Of gold, and lines of Naiads' long bright tress.
Heaven shield thee for thine utter loveliness!
Thy mossy footstool shall the altar be
'Fore which I 'll bend, bending, dear love, to thee:
Those lips shall be my Delphos, and shall speak
Laws to my footsteps, colour to my cheek,
Trembling or stedfastness to this same voice,
And of three sweetest pleasurings the choice:
And that affectionate light, those diamond things
Those eyes, those passions, those supreme pearl springs,
Shall be my grief, or twinkle me to pleasure.
Say, is not bliss within our perfect seisure?
O that I could not doubt?»

The mountaineer
Thus strove by fancies vain and crude to clear
His briar'd path to some tranquillity.
It gave bright gladness to his lady's eye,
And yet the tears she wept were tears of sorrow;
Answering thus, just as the golden morrow
Beam'd upward from the valleys of the east:
«O that the flutter of this heart had ceased,
Or the sweet name of love had pass'd away!
Young feather'd tyrant! by a swift decay
Wilt thou devote this body to the earth:
And I do think that at my very birth
I lisp'd thy blooming titles inwardly;
For at the first, first dawn and thought of thee,
With uplift hands I blest the stars of heaven.
Art thou not cruel? Ever have I striven
To think thee kind, but ah, it will not do?
When yet a child, I heard that kisses drew
Favour from thee, and so I kisses gave
To the void air, bidding them find out love:
But when I came to feel how far above
All fancy, pride, and fickle maidenhood,
All earthly pleasure, all imagined good,
Was the warm tremble of a devout kiss,—
Even then, that moment, at the thought of this,
Fainting I fell into a bed of flowers,
And languish'd there three days. Ye milder powers,
Am I not cruelly wrong'd? Believe, believe
Me, dear Endymion, were I to weave
With my own fancies garlands of sweet life,
Thou shouldst be one of all. Ah, bitter strife!
I may not be thy love: I am forbidden—
Indeed I am—thwarted, affrighted, chidden,
By things I trembled at, and gorgon wrath.
Twice hast thou ask'd whither I went: henceforth
Ask me no more! I may not utter it,
Nor may I be thy love. We might commit
Ourselves at once to vengeance; we might die;
We might embrace and die: voluptuous thought!
Enlarge not to my hunger, or I 'm caught
In trammels of perverse deliciousness.
No, no, that shall not be: thee will I bless,
And bid a long adieu.»

The Carian
No word return'd: both lovelorn, silent, wan,

Into the valleys green together went.
Far wandering, they were perforce content
To sit beneath a fair lone beechen tree;
Nor at each other gazed, but heavily
Pored on its hazel cirque of shedded leaves.

Endymion! unhappy! it nigh grieves
Me to behold thee thus in last extreme:
Enskied ere this, but truly that I deem
Truth the best music in a first-born song.
Thy lute-voiced brother will I sing ere long,
And thou shalt aid—hast thou not aided me?
Yes, moonlight Emperor! felicity
Has been thy meed for many thousand years;
Yet often have I, on the brink of tears,
Mourn'd as if yet thou wert a forester;—
Forgetting the old tale.

He did not stir
His eyes from the dead leaves, or one small pulse
Of joy he might have felt. The spirit culls
Unfaded amaranth, when wild it strays
Through the old garden-ground of boyish days.
A little onward ran the very stream
By which he took his first soft poppy dream;
And on the very bark 'gainst which he leant
A crescent he had carved, and round it spent
His skill in little stars. The teeming tree
Had swoll'n and green'd the pious charactery,
But not ta'en out. Why, there was not a slope
Up which he had not fear'd the antelope;
And not a tree, beneath whose rooty shade
He had not with his tamed leopards play'd:
Nor could an arrow light, or javelin,
Fly in the air where his had never been—
And yet he knew it not.

O treachery!
Why does his lady smile, pleasing her eye
With all his sorrowing? He sees her not.
But who so stares on him? His sister sure!
Peona of the woods!—Can she endure—
Impossible—how dearly they embrace!
His lady smiles; delight is in her face;
It is no treachery.

« Dear brother mine!
Endymion, weep not so! Why shouldst thou pine
When all great Latmos so exalt will be?
Thank the great gods, and look not bitterly;
And speak not one pale word, and sigh no more.
Sure I will not believe thou hast such store
Of grief, to last thee to my kiss again.
Thou surely canst not bear a mind in pain,
Come hand in hand with one so beautiful.
Be happy both of you! for I will pull
The flowers of autumn for your coronals.
Pan's holy priest for young Endymion calls;
And when he is restored, thou, fairest dame,
Shalt be our queen. Now, is it not a shame
To see ye thus,—not very, very sad?
Perhaps ye are too happy to be glad:
O feel as if it were a common day;
Free-voiced as one who never was away.
No tongue shall ask, whence come ye? but ye shall
Be gods of your own rest imperial.
Not even I, for one whole month, will pry
Into the hours that have pass'd us by,
Since in my arbour I did sing to thee.
O Hermes! on this very night will be
A hymning up to Cynthia, queen of light;
For the soothsayers old saw yesternight
Good visions in the air,—whence will befal,
As say these sages, health perpetual
To shepherds and their flocks; and furthermore,
In Dian's face they read the gentle lore:
Therefore for her these vesper-carols are.
Our friends will all be there from nigh and far.
Many upon thy death have ditties made;
And many, even now, their foreheads shade
With cypress, on a day of sacrifice.
Now singing for our maids shalt thou devise,
And pluck the sorrow from our huntsmen's brows.
Tell me, my lady-queen, how to espouse
This wayward brother to his rightful joys!
His eyes are on thee bent, as thou didst poise
His fate most goddess-like. Help me, I pray,
To lure—Endymion, dear brother, say
What ails thee?» He could bear no more, and so
Bent his soul fiercely like a spiritual bow,
And twang'd it inwardly, and calmly said:
« I would have thee my only friend, sweet maid!
My only visitor! not ignorant though,
That those deceptions which for pleasure go
'Mong men, are pleasures real as real may be:
But there are higher ones I may not see,
If impiously an earthly realm I take.
Since I saw thee, I have been wide awake
Night after night, and day by day, until
Of the empyrean I have drunk my fill.
Let it content thee, Sister, seeing me
More happy than betides mortality.
A hermit young, I 'll live in mossy cave,
Where thou alone shalt come to me, and lave
Thy spirit in the wonders I shall tell.
Through me the shepherd realm shall prosper well;
For to thy tongue will I all health confide.
And, for my sake, let this young maid abide
With thee as a dear sister. Thou alone,
Peona, mayst return to me. I own
This may sound strangely: but when, dearest girl,
Thou seest it for my happiness, no pearl
Will trespass down those cheeks. Companion fair!
Wilt be content to dwell with her, to share
This sister's love with me?» Like one resign'd
And bent by circumstances, and thereby blind
In self-commitment, thus that meek unknown:
« Aye, but a buzzing by my ears has flown,
Of jubilee to Dian:—truth I heard!
Well then, I see there is no little bird,
Tender soever, but is Jove's own care.
Long have I sought for rest, and, unaware,
Behold I find it! so exalted too!
So after my own heart! I knew, I knew
There was a place untenanted in it;
In that same void white Chastity shall sit,
And monitor me nightly to lone slumber.
With sanest lips I vow me to the number
Of Dian's sisterhood; and, kind lady,
With thy good help, this very night shall see

My future days to her fane consecrate.»

As feels a dreamer what doth most create
His own particular fright, so these three felt:
Or like one who, in after ages, knelt
To Lucifer or Baal, when he 'd pine
After a little sleep: or when in mine
Far under-ground, a sleeper meets his friends
Who know him not. Each diligently bends
Tow'rds common thoughts and things for very fear;
Striving their ghastly malady to cheer,
By thinking it a thing of yes and no,
That housewives talk of. But the spirit-blow
Was struck, and all were dreamers. At the last
Endymion said: « Are not our fates all cast?
Why stand we here? Adieu, ye tender pair!
Adieu!» Whereat those maidens, with wild stare,
Walk'd dizzily away. Pain'd and hot
His eyes went after them, until they got
Near to a cypress grove, whose deadly maw,
In one swift moment, would what then he saw
Engulf for ever. « Stay!» he cried, « ah, stay!
Turn, damsels! hist! one word I have to say:
Sweet Indian, I would see thee once again.
It is a thing I dote on: so I 'd fain,
Peona, ye should hand in hand repair,
Into those holy groves that silent are
Behind great Dian's temple. I 'll be yon,
At vesper's earliest twinkle—they are gone—
But once, once, once again—» At this he press'd
His hands against his face, and then did rest
His head upon a mossy hillock green
And so remain'd as he a corpse had been
All the long day; save when he scantly lifted
His eyes abroad, to see how shadows shifted
With the slow move of time,—sluggish and weary
Until the poplar tops, in journey dreary,
Had reach'd the river's brim. Then up he rose,
And, slowly as that very river flows,
Walk'd tow'rds the temple-grove with this lament:
« Why such a golden eve? The breeze is sent
Careful and soft, that not a leaf may fall
Before the serene father of them all
Bows down his summer head below the west.
Now am I of breath, speech, and speed possest,
But at the setting I must bid adieu
To her for the last time. Night will strew
On the damp grass myriads of lingering leaves,
And with them shall I die; nor much it grieves
To die, when summer dies on the cold sward.
Why, I have been a butterfly, a lord
Of flowers, garlands, love-knots, silly posies,
Groves, meadows, melodies, and arbour-roses;
My kingdom 's at its death, and just it is
That I should die with it: so in all this
We miseal grief, bale, sorrow, heart-break, woe,
What is there to plain of? By Titan's foe
I am but rightly served.» So saying, he
Tripp'd lightly on, in sort of deathful glee;
Laughing at the clear stream and setting sun,
As though they jests had been: nor had he done
His laugh at nature's holy countenance,
Until that grove appear'd, as if perchance,
And then his tongue with sober seemlihed
Gave utterance as he enter'd: «Ha!» I said,
« King of the butterflies; but by this gloom,
And by old Rhadamanthus' tongue of doom,
This dusk religion, pomp of solitude,
And the Promethean clay by thief endued,
By old Saturnus' forelock, by his head
Shook with eternal palsy, I did wed
Myself to things of light from infancy;
And thus to be cast out, thus lorn to die,
Is sure enough to make a mortal man
Grow impious.» So he inwardly began
On things for which no wording can be found;
Deeper and deeper sinking, until drown'd
Beyond the reach of music: for the choir
Of Cynthia he heard not, though rough briar
Nor muffling thicket interposed to dull
The vesper hymn, far swollen, soft and full,
Through the dark pillars of those sylvan aisles.
He saw not the two maidens, nor their smiles,
Wan as primroses gather'd at midnight
By chilly-finger'd spring. Unhappy wight!
Endymion!» said Peona, « we are here!
What wouldst thou ere we all are laid on bier?»
Then he embraced her, and his lady's hand
Press'd, saying: « Sister, I would have command,
If it were heaven's will, on our sad fate.»
At which that dark-eyed stranger stood elate
And said, in a new voice, but sweet as love,
To Endymion's amaze: « By Cupid's dove,
And so thou shalt! and by the lily truth
Of my own breast thou shalt, beloved youth!»
And as she spake, into her face there came
Light, as reflected from a silver flame:
Her long black hair swell'd ampler, in display
Full golden; in her eyes a brighter day
Dawn'd blue and full of love. Aye, he beheld
Phœbe, his passion! joyous she upheld
Her lucid bow, continuing thus: « Drear, drear
Has our delaying been; but foolish fear
Withheld me first; and then decrees of fate;
And then 't was fit that from this mortal state
Thou shouldst, my love, by some unlook'd-for change
Be spiritualized. Peona, we shall range
These forests, and to thee they safe shall be
As was thy cradle; hither shalt thou flee
To meet us many a time.» Next Cynthia bright
Peona kiss'd, and bless'd with fair good night:
Her brother kiss'd her too, and knelt adown
Before his goddess, in a blissful swoon.
She gave her fair hands to him, and behold,
Before three swiftest kisses he had told,
They vanish'd far away!—Peona went
Home through the gloomy wood in wonderment.

Lamia.

PART I.

Upon a time, before the faery broods
Drove Nymph and Satyr from the prosperous woods,
Before King Oberon's bright diadem,
Sceptre, and mantle, clasp'd with dewy gem,
Frighted away the Dryads and the Fauns
From rushes green, and brakes, and cowslip'd lawns,
The ever-smitten Hermes empty left
His golden throne, bent warm on amorous theft:
From high Olympus had he stolen light,
On this side of Jove's clouds, to escape the sight
Of his great summoner, and made retreat
Into a forest on the shores of Crete.
For somewhere in that sacred island dwelt
A nymph, to whom all hoofed Satyrs knelt;
At whose white feet the languid Tritons pour'd
Pearls, while on land they wither'd and adored.
Fast by the springs where she to bathe was wont,
And in those meads where sometime she might haunt,
Were strewn rich gifts, unknown to any Muse,
Though Fancy's casket were unlock'd to chuse.
Ah, what a world of love was at her feet!
So Hermes thought, and a celestial heat
Burnt from his winged heels to either ear,
That from a whiteness, as the lily clear,
Blush'd into roses 'mid his golden hair,
Fallen in jealous curls about his shoulders bare.
From vale to vale, from wood to wood, he flew,
Breathing upon the flowers his passion new,
And wound with many a river to its head,
To find where this sweet nymph prepared her secret bed:
In vain; the sweet nymph might nowhere be found,
And so he rested, on the lonely ground,
Pensive, and full of painful jealousies
Of the Wood-Gods, and even the very trees.
There as he stood, he heard a mournful voice,
Such as once heard, in gentle heart, destroys
All pain but pity: thus the lone voice spake:
"When from this wreathed tomb shall I awake!
When move in a sweet body fit for life,
And love, and pleasure, and the ruddy strife
Of hearts and lips! Ah, miserable me!"
The God, dove-footed, glided silently
Round bush and tree, soft-brushing, in his speed,
The taller grasses and full-flowering weed,
Until he found a palpitating snake,
Bright, and cirque-couchant in a dusky brake.

She was a gordian shape of dazzling hue,
Vermilion-spotted, golden, green, and blue;
Striped like a zebra, freckled like a pard,
Eyed like a peacock, and all crimson barr'd;
And full of silver moons, that, as she breathed,
Dissolved, or brighter shone, or interwreathed
Their lustres with the gloomier tapestries—
So rainbow-sided, touch'd with miseries,
She seem'd, at once, some penanced lady elf,
Some demon's mistress, or the demon's self.
Upon her crest she wore a wannish fire
Sprinkled with stars, like Ariadne's tiar:
Her head was serpent, but ah, bitter-sweet!
She had a woman's mouth with all its pearls complete:
And for her eyes—what could such eyes do there
But weep, and weep, that they were born so fair?
As Proserpine still weeps for her Sicilian air.
Her throat was serpent, but the words she spake
Came, as through bubbling honey, for Love's sake,
And thus; while Hermes on his pinions lay,
Like a stoop'd falcon ere he takes his prey:

"Fair Hermes! crown'd with feathers, fluttering light,
I had a splendid dream of thee last night:
I saw thee sitting, on a throne of gold,
Among the Gods, upon Olympus old,
The only sad one; for thou didst not hear
The soft, lute-finger'd Muses chaunting clear,
Nor even Apollo when he sang alone,
Deaf to his throbbing throat's long, long melodious moan.
I dreamt I saw thee, robed in purple flakes,
Break amorous through the clouds, as morning breaks,
And, swiftly as a bright Phœbean dart,
Strike for the Cretan isle; and here thou art!
Too gentle Hermes, hast thou found the maid?"
Whereat the star of Lethe not delay'd
His rosy eloquence, and thus inquired:
"Thou smooth-lipp'd serpent, surely high inspired!
Thou beauteous wreath, with melancholy eyes,
Possess whatever bliss thou canst devise,
Telling me only where my nymph is fled,—
Where she doth breathe!" "Bright planet, thou hast said,"
Return'd the snake, "but seal with oaths, fair God!"
"I swear," said Hermes, "by my serpent rod,
And by thine eyes, and by thy starry crown!"
Light flew his earnest words, among the blossoms blown.
Then thus again the brilliance feminine:
"Too frail of heart! for this lost nymph of thine,
Free as the air, invisibly, she strays
About these thornless wilds; her pleasant days
She tastes unseen; unseen her nimble feet
Leave traces in the grass and flowers sweet:
From weary tendrils, and bow'd branches green,
She plucks the fruit unseen, she bathes unseen:
And by my power is her beauty veil'd
To keep it unaffronted, unassail'd
By the love-glances of unlovely eyes,
Of Satyrs, Fauns, and blear'd Silenus' sighs.
Pale grew her immortality, for woe
Of all these lovers, and she grieved so
I took compassion on her, bade her steep
Her hair in weird syrops, that would keep
Her loveliness invisible, yet free
To wander as she loves, in liberty.
Thou shalt behold her, Hermes, thou alone,
If thou wilt, as thou swearest, grant my boon!"
Then, once again, the charmed God began
An oath, and through the serpent's ears it ran
Warm, tremulous, devout, psalterian.

Ravish'd she lifted her Circean head,
Blush'd a live damask, and swift-lisping said,
"I was a woman, let me have once more
A woman's shape, and charming as before.
I love a youth of Corinth—O the bliss!
Give me my woman's form, and place me where he is.
Stoop, Hermes, let me breathe upon thy brow,
And thou shalt see thy sweet nymph even now."
The God on half-shut feathers sank serene,
She breathed upon his eyes, and swift was seen
Of both the guarded nymph near-smiling on the green.
It was no dream; or say a dream it was,
Real are the dreams of Gods, and smoothly pass
Their pleasures in a long immortal dream.
One warm, flush'd moment, hovering, it might seem
Dash'd by the wood-nymph's beauty, so he burn'd;
Then, lighting on the printless verdure, turn'd
To the swoon'd serpent, and with languid arm,
Delicate, put to proof the lythe Caducean charm.
So done, upon the nymph his eyes he bent
Full of adoring tears and blandishment,
And towards her stept: she, like a moon in wane,
Faded before him, cower'd, nor could restrain
Her fearful sobs, self-folding like a flower
That faints into itself at evening hour:
But the God fostering her chilled hand,
She felt the warmth, her eyelids open'd bland,
And, like new flowers at morning song of bees,
Bloom'd, and gave up her honey to the lees.
Into the green-recessed woods they flew;
Nor grew they pale, as mortal lovers do.

Left to herself, the serpent now began
To change; her elfin blood in madness ran,
Her mouth foam'd, and the grass, therewith besprent,
Wither'd at dew so sweet and virulent;
Her eyes in torture fix'd, and anguish drear,
Hot, glazed, and wide, with lid-lashes all sear,
Flash'd phosphor and sharp sparks, without one cooling tear.
The colours all inflamed throughout her train,
She writhed about, convulsed with scarlet pain:
A deep volcanian yellow took the place
Of all her milder-mooned body's grace;
And, as the lava ravishes the mead,
Spoilt all her silver mail, and golden brede:
Made gloom of all her frecklings, streaks and bars,
Eclipsed her crescents, and lick'd up her stars:
So that, in moments few, she was undrest
Of all her sapphires, greens, and amethyst,
And rubious-argent: of all these bereft,
Nothing but pain and ugliness were left.
Still shone her crown; that vanish'd, also she
Melted and disappear'd as suddenly;
And in the air, her new voice luting soft,
Cried, "Lycius! gentle Lycius!"—Borne aloft
With the bright mists about the mountains hoar
These words dissolved: Crete's forests heard no more.

Whither fled Lamia, now a lady bright,
A full-born beauty new and exquisite?
She fled into that valley they pass o'er
Who go to Corinth from Cenchreas' shore;
And rested at the foot of those wild hills,
The rugged founts of the Peræan rills,
And of that other ridge whose barren back
Stretches, with all its mist and cloudy rack,
South-westward to Cleone. There she stood
About a young bird's flutter from a wood,
Fair, on a sloping green of mossy tread,
By a clear pool, wherein she passioned
To see herself escaped from so sore ills,
While her robes flaunted with the daffodils.

Ah, happy Lycius!—for she was a maid
More beautiful than ever twisted braid,
Or sigh'd, or blush'd, or on spring-flowered lea
Spread a green kirtle to the minstrelsy:
A virgin purest lipp'd, yet in the lore
Of love deep learned to the red heart's core:
Not one hour old, yet of sciential brain
To unperplex bliss from its neighbour pain;
Define their pettish limits, and estrange
Their points of contact, and swift counterchange;
Intrigue with the specious chaos, and dispart
Its most ambiguous atoms with sure art;
As though in Cupid's college she had spent
Sweet days a lovely graduate, still unshent,
And kept his rosy terms in idle languishment.

Why this fair creature chose so fairily
By the wayside to linger, we shall see;
But first 't is fit to tell how she could muse
And dream, when in the serpent prison-house,
Of all she list, strange or magnificent:
How, ever, where she will'd, her spirit went;
Whether to faint Elysium, or where
Down through tress-lifting waves the Nereids fair
Wind into Thetis' bower by many a pearly stair;
Or where God Bacchus drains his cups divine,
Stretch'd out, at ease, beneath a glutinous pine;
Or where in Pluto's gardens palatine
Mulciber's columns gleam in far piazzian line.
And sometimes into cities she would send
Her dream, with feast and rioting to blend;
And once, while among mortals dreaming thus,
She saw the young Corinthian Lycius
Charioting foremost in the envious race,
Like a young Jove with calm uneager face,
And fell into a swooning love of him.
Now on the moth-time of that evening dim
He would return that way, as well she knew,
To Corinth from the shore; for freshly blew
The eastern soft wind, and his galley now
Grated the quay-stones with her brazen prow
In port Cenchreas, from Egina isle
Fresh anchor'd; whither he had been awhile
To sacrifice to Jove, whose temple there
Waits with high marble doors for blood and incense rare.
Jove heard his vows, and better'd his desire;
For by some freakful chance he made retire
From his companions, and set forth to walk,
Perhaps grown wearied of their Corinth talk:
Over the solitary hills he fared,
Thoughtless at first, but ere eve's star appeared
His phantasy was lost, where reason fades,
In the calm'd twilight of Platonic shades.
Lamia beheld him coming, near, more near—
Close to her passing, in indifference drear,
His silent sandals swept the mossy green;
So neighbour'd to him, and yet so unseen

She stood: he pass'd, shut up in mysteries,
His mind wrapp'd like his mantle, while her eyes
Follow'd his steps, and her neck regal white
Turn'd—syllabling thus, « Ah, Lycius bright!
And will you leave me on the hills alone?
Lycius, look back! and be some pity shown.»
He did; not with cold wonder fearingly,
But Orpheus-like at an Eurydice;
For so delicious were the words she sung,
It seem'd he had loved them a whole summer long:
And soon his eyes had drunk her beauty up,
Leaving no drop in the bewildering cup,
And still the cup was full,—while he, afraid
Lest she should vanish ere his lip had paid
Due adoration, thus began to adore;
Her soft look growing coy, she saw his chain so sure:
« Leave thee alone! Look back! Ah, Goddess, see
Whether my eyes can ever turn from thee!
For pity do not this sad heart belie—
Even as thou vanishest so I shall die.
Stay! though a Naiad of the rivers, stay!
To thy far wishes will thy streams obey:
Stay! though the greenest woods be thy domain,
Alone they can drink up the morning rain:
Though a descended Pleiad, will not one
Of thine harmonious sisters keep in tune
Thy spheres, and as thy silver proxy shine?
So sweetly to these ravish'd ears of mine
Came thy sweet greeting, that if thou shouldst fade
Thy memory will waste me to a shade:—
For pity do not melt!»—« If I should stay,»
Said Lamia, « here, upon this floor of clay,
And pain my steps upon these flowers too rough,
What canst thou say or do of charm enough
To dull the nice remembrance of my home?
Thou canst not ask me with thee here to roam
Over these hills and vales, where no joy is,—
Empty of immortality and bliss!
Thou art a scholar, Lycius, and must know
That finer spirits cannot breathe below
In human climes, and live: Alas! poor youth,
What taste of purer air hast thou to soothe
My essence? What serener palaces,
Where I may all my many senses please,
And by mysterious sleights a hundred thirsts appease?
It cannot be—Adieu!» So said, she rose
Tiptoe with white arms spread. He, sick to lose
The amorous promise of her lone complain,
Swoon'd, murmuring of love, and pale with pain.
The cruel lady, without any show
Of sorrow for her tender favourite's woe,
But rather, if her eyes could brighter be,
With brighter eyes and slow amenity,
Put her new lips to his, and gave afresh
The life she had so tangled in her mesh:
And as he from one trance was wakening
Into another, she began to sing,
Happy in beauty, life, and love, and every thing,
A song of love, too sweet for earthly lyres,
While, like held breath, the stars drew in their panting fires.
And then she whisper'd in such trembling tone,
As those who, safe together met alone
For the first time through many anguish'd days,
Use other speech than looks; bidding him raise
His drooping head, and clear his soul of doubt,
For that she was a woman, and without
Any more subtle fluid in her veins
Than throbbing blood, and that the self-same pains
Inhabited her frail-strung heart as his.
And next she wonder'd how his eyes could miss
Her face so long in Corinth, where, she said,
She dwelt but half retired, and there had led
Days happy as the gold coin could invent
Without the aid of love; yet in content
Till she saw him, as once she pass'd him by,
Where 'gainst a column he leant thoughtfully
At Venus' temple porch, 'mid baskets heap'd
Of amorous herbs and flowers, newly reap'd
Late on that eve, as 't was the night before
The Adonian feast; whereof she saw no more,
But wept alone those days, for why should she adore?
Lycius from death awoke into amaze,
To see her still, and singing so sweet lays;
Then from amaze into delight he fell
To hear her whisper woman's lore so well;
And every word she spake enticed him on
To unperplex'd delight and pleasure known.
Let the mad poets say whate'er they please
Of the sweets of Fairies, Peris, Goddesses,
There is not such a treat among them all,
Haunters of cavern, lake, and waterfall,
As a real woman, lineal indeed
From Pyrrha's pebbles or old Adam's seed.
Thus gentle Lamia judged, and judged aright,
That Lycius could not love in half a fright,
So threw the goddess off, and won his heart
More pleasantly by playing woman's part,
With no more awe than what her beauty gave,
That, while it smote, still guaranteed to save.
Lycius to all made eloquent reply,
Marrying to every word a twin-born sigh;
And last, pointing to Corinth, ask'd her sweet,
If 't was too far that night for her soft feet.
The way was short, for Lamia's eagerness
Made, by a spell, the triple league decrease
To a few paces; not at all surmised
By blinded Lycius, so in her comprised
They pass'd the city gates, he knew not how,
So noiseless, and he never thought to know.

As men talk in a dream, so Corinth all,
Throughout her palaces imperial,
And all her populous streets and temples lewd,
Mutter'd, like tempest in the distance brew'd,
To the wide-spreaded night above her towers.
Men, women, rich and poor, in the cool hours,
Shuffled their sandals o'er the pavement white,
Companion'd or alone; while many a light
Flared, here and there, from wealthy festivals,
And threw their moving shadows on the walls,
Or found them cluster'd in the corniced shade
Of some arch'd temple door, or dusky colonnade.

Muffling his face, of greeting friends in fear,
Her fingers he press'd hard, as one came near
With curl'd grey beard, sharp eyes, and smooth bald crown,
Slow-stepp'd, and robed in philosophic gown:
Lycius shrank closer, as they met and past,
Into his mantle, adding wings to haste,

While hurried Lamia trembled: « Ah,» said he,
« Why do you shudder, love, so ruefully?
Why does your tender palm dissolve in dew?»—
« I'm wearied,» said fair Lamia: « tell me who
Is that old man? I cannot bring to mind
His features:—Lycius! wherefore did you blind
Yourself from his quick eyes?» Lycius replied,
« 'T is Apollonius sage, my trusty guide
And good instructor; but to-night he seems
The ghost of folly haunting my sweet dreams.»

While yet he spake they had arrived before
A pillar'd porch, with lofty portal door,
Where hung a silver lamp, whose phosphor glow
Reflected in the slabbed steps below,
Mild as a star in water; for so new,
And so unsullied was the marble hue,
So through the crystal polish, liquid fine,
Ran the dark veins, that none but feet divine
Could e'er have touch'd there. Sounds Æolian
Breathed from the hinges, as the ample span
Of the wide doors disclosed a place unknown
Some time to any, but those two alone,
And a few Persian mutes, who that same year
Were seen about the markets: none knew where
They could inhabit; the most curious
Were foil'd, who watch'd to trace them to their house:
And but the flitter-winged verse must tell,
For truth's sake, what woe afterwards befel,
'T would humour many a heart to leave them thus,
Shut from the busy world of more incredulous.

PART II.

Love in a hut, with water and a crust,
Is—Love, forgive us!—cinders, ashes, dust;
Love in a palace is perhaps at last
More grievous torment than a hermit's fast:—
That is a doubtful tale from faery land,
Hard for the non-elect to understand.
Had Lycius lived to hand his story down,
He might have given the moral a fresh frown,
Or clench'd it quite: but too short was their bliss
To breed distrust and hate, that make the soft voice hiss.
Besides, there, nightly, with terrific glare,
Love, jealous grown of so complete a pair,
Hover'd and buzz'd his wings, with fearful roar,
Above the lintel of their chamber door,
And down the passage cast a glow upon the floor.

For all this came a ruin: side by side
They were enthroned, in the even tide,
Upon a couch, near to a curtaining
Whose airy texture, from a golden string,
Floated into the room, and let appear
Unveil'd the summer heaven, blue and clear,
Betwixt two marble shafts:—there they reposed,
Where use had made it sweet, with eyelids closed,
Saving a tythe which love still open kept,
That they might see each other while they almost slept;
When from the slope side of a suburb hill,
Deafening the swallow's twitter, came a thrill
Of trumpets—Lycius started—the sounds fled,
But left a thought, a buzzing in his head.

For the first time, since first he harbour'd in
That purple-lined palace of sweet sin,
His spirit pass'd beyond its golden bourn
Into the noisy world almost forsworn.
The lady, ever watchful, penetrant,
Saw this with pain, so arguing a want
Of something more, more than her empery
Of joys; and she began to moan and sigh
Because he mused beyond her, knowing well
That but a moment's thought is passion's passing bell.
« Why do you sigh, fair creature?» whisper'd he:
« Why do you think?» return'd she tenderly:
« You have deserted me; where am I now?
Not in your heart while care weighs on your brow:
No, no, you have dismiss'd me; and I go
From your breast houseless: ay, it must be so.»
He answer'd, bending to her open eyes,
Where he was mirror'd small in paradise,—
« My silver planet, both of eve and morn!
Why will you plead yourself so sad forlorn,
While I am striving how to fill my heart
With deeper crimson, and a double smart?
How to entangle, trammel up and snare
Your soul in mine, and labyrinth you there,
Like the hid scent in an unbudded rose?
Ay, a sweet kiss—you see your mighty woes.
My thoughts! shall I unveil them? Listen then!
What mortal hath a prize, that other men
May be confounded and abash'd withal,
But lets it sometimes pace abroad majestical,
And triumph, as in thee I should rejoice
Amid the hoarse alarm of Corinth's voice.
Let my foes choke, and my friends shout afar,
While through the thronged streets your bridal car
Wheels round its dazzling spokes.»—The lady's cheek
Trembled; she nothing said, but, pale and meek,
Arose and knelt before him, wept a rain
Of sorrows at his words; at last with pain
Beseeching him, the while his hand she wrung,
To change his purpose. He thereat was stung,
Perverse, with stronger fancy to reclaim
Her wild and timid nature to his aim;
Besides, for all his love, in self despite,
Against his better self, he took delight
Luxurious in her sorrows, soft and new.
His passion, cruel grown, took on a hue
Fierce and sanguineous as 't was possible
In one whose brow had no dark veins to swell.
Fine was the mitigated fury, like
Apollo's presence when in act to strike
The serpent—Ha, the serpent! certes, she
Was none. She burnt, she loved the tyranny,
And, all subdued, consented to the hour
When to the bridal he should lead his paramour.
Whispering in midnight silence, said the youth,
« Sure some sweet name thou hast, though, by my truth,
I have not ask'd it, ever thinking thee
Not mortal, but of heavenly progeny,
As still I do. Hast any mortal name,
Fit appellation for this dazzling frame?
Or friends or kinsfolk on the citied earth,
To share our marriage feast and nuptial mirth?»
« I have no friends,» said Lamia, « no, not one;
My presence in wide Corinth hardly known:
My parents' bones are in their dusty urns
Sepulchred, where no kindled incense burns,

Seeing all their luckless race are dead, save me,
And I neglect the holy rite for thee.
Even as you list invite your many guests;
But if, as now it seems, your vision rests
With any pleasure on me, do not bid
Old Apollonius—from him keep me hid."
Lycius, perplex'd at words so blind and blank,
Made close inquiry; from whose touch she shrank,
Feigning a sleep; and he to the dull shade
Of deep sleep in a moment was betray'd.

It was the custom then to bring away
The bride from home at blushing shut of day,
Veil'd, in a chariot, heralded along
By strewn flowers, torches, and a marriage song,
With other pageants: but this fair unknown
Had not a friend. So being left alone
(Lycius was gone to summon all his kin),
And knowing surely she could never win
His foolish heart from its mad pompousness,
She set herself, high-thoughted, how to dress
The misery in fit magnificence.
She did so, but 't is doubtful how and whence
Came, and who were her subtle servitors.
About the halls, and to and from the doors,
There was a noise of wings, till in short space
The glowing banquet-room shone with wide-arched grace.
A haunting music, sole perhaps and lone
Supportress of the faery-roof, made moan
Throughout, as fearful the whole charm might fade.
Fresh carved cedar, mimicking a glade
Of palm and plantain, met from either side,
High in the midst, in honour of the bride:
Two palms and then two plantains, and so on,
From either side their stems branch'd one to one
All down the aisled place; and beneath all
There ran a stream of lamps straight on from wall to wall.
So canopied, lay an untasted feast
Teeming with odours. Lamia, regal drest,
Silently paced about, and as she went,
In pale contented sort of discontent,
Mission'd her viewless servants to enrich
The fretted splendour of each nook and niche.
Between the tree-stems, marbled plain at first,
Came jasper pannels; then, anon, there burst
Forth creeping imagery of slighter trees,
And with the larger wove in small intricacies.
Approving all, she faded at self-will,
And shut the chamber up, close, hush'd and still,
Complete and ready for the revels rude,
When dreadful guests would come to spoil her solitude.

The day appear'd, and all the gossip rout.
O senseless Lycius! Madman! wherefore flout
The silent-blessing fate, warm cloister'd hours,
And show to common eyes these secret bowers?
The herd approach'd; each guest, with busy brain,
Arriving at the portal, gazed amain,
And enter'd marveling: for they knew the street,
Remember'd it from childhood all complete
Without a gap, yet ne'er before had seen
That royal porch, that high-built fair demesne;
So in they hurried all, mazed, curious and keen:
Save one, who look'd thereon with eye severe,
And with calm-planted steps walk'd in austere;
'T was Apollonius: something too he laugh'd,
As though some knotty problem, that had daft
His patient thought, had now begun to thaw,
And solve and melt:—'t was just as he foresaw.

He met within the murmurous vestibule
His young disciple. "'T is no common rule,
Lycius," said he, "for uninvited guest
To force himself upon you, and infest
With an unbidden presence the bright throng
Of younger friends; yet must I do this wrong,
And you forgive me." Lycius blush'd, and led
The old man through the inner doors broad-spread;
With reconciling words and courteous mien
Turning into sweet milk the sophist's spleen.

Of wealthy lustre was the banquet-room,
Fill'd with pervading brilliance and perfume:
Before each lucid pannel fuming stood
A censer fed with myrrh and spiced wood,
Each by a sacred tripod held aloft,
Whose slender feet wide-swerved upon the soft
Wool-woofed carpets: fifty wreaths of smoke
From fifty censers their light voyage took
To the high roof, still mimick'd as they rose
Along the mirror'd walls by twin-clouds odorous.
Twelve sphered tables, by silk seats insphered,
High as the level of a man's breast rear'd
On libbard's paws, upheld the heavy gold
Of cups and goblets, and the store thrice told
Of Ceres' horn, and, in huge vessels, wine
Came from the gloomy tun with merry shine.
Thus loaded with a feast the tables stood,
Each shrining in the midst the image of a God.

When in an antechamber every guest
Had felt the cold full sponge to pleasure press'd,
By minist'ring slaves, upon his hands and feet,
And fragrant oils with ceremony meet
Pour'd on his hair, they all moved to the feast
In white robes, and themselves in order placed
Around the silken couches, wondering
Whence all this mighty cost and blaze of wealth could spring.

Soft went the music the soft air along,
While fluent Greek a vowel'd under-song
Kept up among the guests, discoursing low
At first, for scarcely was the wine at flow;
But when the happy vintage touch'd their brains,
Louder they talk, and louder come the strains
Of powerful instruments:—the gorgeous dyes,
The space, the splendour of the draperies,
The roof of awful richness, nectarous cheer,
Beautiful slaves, and Lamia's self, appear,
Now, when the wine has done its rosy deed,
And every soul from human trammels freed,
No more so strange; for merry wine, sweet wine,
Will make Elysian shades not too fair, too divine.
Soon was God Bacchus at meridian height;
Flush'd were their cheeks, and bright eyes double bright:
Garlands of every green, and every scent
From vales deflower'd, or forest-trees branch-rent,
In baskets of bright osier'd gold were brought
High as the handles heap'd, to suit the thought

Of every guest; that each, as he did please,
Might fancy-fit his brows, silk-pillow'd at his ease.

What wreath for Lamia? What for Lycius?
What for the sage, old Apollonius?
Upon her aching forehead be there hung
The leaves of willow and of adder's tongue;
And for the youth, quick, let us strip for him
The thyrsus, that his watching eyes may swim
Into forgetfulness; and, for the sage,
Let spear-grass and the spiteful thistle wage
War on his temples. Do not all charms fly
At the mere touch of cold philosophy?
There was an awful rainbow once in heaven:
We know her woof, her texture; she is given
In the dull catalogue of common things.
Philosophy will clip an Angel's wings,
Conquer all mysteries by rule and line,
Empty the haunted air, and gnomed mine—
Unweave a rainbow, as it erewhile made
The tender-person'd Lamia melt into a shade.

By her glad Lycius sitting, in chief place,
Scarce saw in all the room another face,
Till, checking his love trance, a cup he took
Full brimm'd, and opposite sent forth a look
'Cross the broad table, to beseech a glance
From his old teacher's wrinkled countenance,
And pledge him. The bald-head philosopher
Had fix'd his eye, without a twinkle or stir
Full on the alarmed beauty of the bride,
Brow-beating her fair form, and troubling her sweet pride.
Lycius then press'd her hand, with devout touch,
As pale it lay upon the rosy couch:
'T was icy, and the cold ran through his veins;
Then sudden it grew hot, and all the pains
Of an unnatural heat shot to his heart.
"Lamia, what means this? Wherefore dost thou start?
Know'st thou that man?" Poor Lamia answer'd not.
He gazed into her eyes, and not a jot
Own'd they the lovelorn piteous appeal:
More, more he gazed: his human senses reel:
Some hungry spell that loveliness absorbs;
There was no recognition in those orbs.
"Lamia!" he cried—and no soft-toned reply.
The many heard, and the loud revelry
Grew hush; the stately music no more breathes;
The myrtle sicken'd in a thousand wreaths.
By faint degrees, voice, lute, and pleasure ceased;
A deadly silence step by step increased,
Until it seem'd a horrid presence there,
And not a man but felt the terror in his hair.
"Lamia!" he shriek'd; and nothing but the shriek
With its sad echo did the silence break.
"Begone, foul dream!" he cried, gazing again
In the bride's face, where now no azure vein
Wander'd on fair-spaced temples; no soft bloom
Misted the cheek; no passion to illume
The deep-recessed vision:—all was blight;
Lamia, no longer fair, there sat a deadly white.
"Shut, shut those juggling eyes, thou ruthless man!
Turn them aside, wretch! or the righteous ban
Of all the Gods, whose dreadful images
Here represent their shadowy presences,
May pierce them on the sudden with the thorn
Of painful blindness; leaving thee forlorn,
In trembling dotage to the feeblest fright
Of conscience, for their long offended might,
For all thine impious proud-heart sophistries,
Unlawful magic, and enticing lies.
Corinthians! look upon that grey-beard wretch!
Mark how, possess'd, his lashless eyelids stretch
Around his demon eyes! Corinthians, see!
My sweet bride withers at their potency."
"Fool!" said the sophist, in an under-tone
Gruff with contempt; which a death-nighing moan
From Lycius answer'd, as heart-struck and lost,
He sank supine beside the aching ghost.
"Fool! Fool!" repeated he, while his eyes still
Relented not, nor moved; "from every ill
Of life have I preserved thee to this day,
And shall I see thee made a serpent's prey?
Then Lamia breathed death-breath; the sophist's eye,
Like a sharp spear, went through her utterly,
Keen, cruel, perceant, stinging: she, as well
As her weak hand could any meaning tell,
Motion'd him to be silent; vainly so,
He look'd and look'd again a level—No!
"A Serpent!" echoed he; no sooner said,
Than with a frightful scream she vanished:
And Lycius' arms were empty of delight,
As were his limbs of life, from that same night.
On the high couch he lay!—his friends came round—
Supported him—no pulse, or breath they found,
And, in its marriage robe, the heavy body wound. [1]

[1] "Philostratus, in his fourth book *de Vita Apollonii*, hath a memorable instance in this kind, which I may not omit, of one Menippus Lycius, a young man twenty-five years of age, that going betwixt Cenchreas and Corinth, met such a phantasm in the habit of a fair gentlewoman, which taking him by the hand, carried him home to her house, in the suburbs of Corinth, and told him she was a Phœnician by birth, and if he would tarry with her, he should bear her sing and play, and drink such wine as never any drank, and no man should molest him; but she, being fair and lovely, would die with him, that was fair and lovely to behold. The young man, a philosopher, otherwise staid and discreet, able to moderate his passions, though not this of love, tarried with her a while to his great content, and at last married her, to whose wedding, amongst other guests, came Apollonius; who, by some probable conjectures, found her out to be a serpent, a lamia; and that all her furniture was, like Tantalus' gold, described by Homer, no substance but mere illusions. When she saw herself descried, she wept, and desired Apollonius to be silent, but he would not be moved, and thereupon she, plate, house, and all that was in it, vanished in an instant: many thousands took notice of this fact, for it was done in the midst of Greece."—BURTON'S *Anatomy of Melancholy*, Part 3, Sect. 2, Memb. I, Subs. I.

Isabella, or the Pot of Basil;

A STORY FROM BOCCACCIO.

I.

Fair Isabel, poor simple Isabel!
Lorenzo, a young palmer in Love's eye!
They could not in the self-same mansion dwell
Without some stir of heart, some malady;
They could not sit at meals but feel how well
It soothed each to be the other by;
They could not, sure, beneath the same roof sleep
But to each other dream, and nightly weep.

II.

With every morn their love grew tenderer,
With every eve deeper and tenderer still;
He might not in house, field, or garden stir,
But her full shape would all his seeing fill;
And his continual voice was pleasanter
To her, than noise of trees or hidden rill;
Her lute-string gave an echo of his name,
She spoilt her half-done broidery with the same.

III.

He knew whose gentle hand was at the latch,
Before the door had given her to his eyes;
And from her chamber-window he would catch
Her beauty farther than the falcon spies;
And constant as her vespers would he watch,
Because her face was turn'd to the same skies;
And with sick longing all the night outwear,
To hear her morning-step upon the stair.

IV.

A whole long month of May in this sad plight
Made their cheeks paler by the break of June:
"To-morrow will I bow to my delight,
To-morrow will I ask my lady's boon."—
"O may I never see another night,
Lorenzo, if thy lips breathe not love's tune."—
So spake they to their pillows; but, alas,
Honeyless days and days did he let pass;

V.

Until sweet Isabella's untouch'd cheek
Fell sick within the rose's just domain,
Fell thin as a young mother's, who doth seek
By every lull to cool her infant's pain:
"How ill she is," said he, "I may not speak,
And yet I will, and tell my love all plain:
If looks speak love-laws, I will drink her tears,
And at the least 't will startle off her cares."

VI.

So said he one fair morning, and all day
His heart beat awfully against his side;
And to his heart he inwardly did pray
For power to speak; but still the ruddy tide
Stifled his voice, and pulsed resolve away—
Fever'd his high conceit of such a bride,
Yet brought him to the meekness of a child:
Alas! when passion is both meek and wild!

VII.

So once more he had waked and anguished
A dreary night of love and misery,
If Isabel's quick eye had not been wed
To every symbol on his forehead high;
She saw it waxing very pale and dead,
And straight all flush'd; so, lisped tenderly,
"Lorenzo!"—here she ceased her timid quest,
But in her tone and look he read the rest.

VIII.

"O Isabella! I can half perceive
That I may speak my grief into thine ear;
If thou didst ever any thing believe,
Believe how I love thee, believe how near
My soul is to its doom: I would not grieve
Thy hand by unwelcome pressing, would not fear
Thine eyes by gazing; but I cannot live
Another night, and not my passion shrive.

IX.

"Love! thou art leading me from wintry cold,
Lady! thou leadest me to summer clime,
And I must taste the blossoms that unfold
In its ripe warmth this gracious morning time."
So said, his erewhile timid lips grew bold,
And poesied with hers in dewy rhyme:
Great bliss was with them, and great happiness
Grew, like a lusty flower in June's caress.

X.

Parting they seem'd to tread upon the air,
Twin roses by the zephyr blown apart
Only to meet again more close, and share
The inward fragrance of each other's heart.
She, to her chamber gone, a ditty fair
Sang, of delicious love and honey'd dart;
He with light steps went up a western hill,
And bade the sun farewell, and joy'd his fill.

XI.

All close they met again, before the dusk
Had taken from the stars its pleasant veil,
All close they met, all eves, before the dusk
Had taken from the stars its pleasant veil,
Close in a bower of hyacinth and musk,
Unknown of any, free from whispering tale.
Ah! better had it been for ever so,
Than idle ears should pleasure in their woe.

XII.

Were they unhappy then?—It cannot be—
Too many tears for lovers have been shed,
Too many sighs give we to them in fee,
Too much of pity after they are dead,
Too many doleful stories do we see,
Whose matter in bright gold were best be read;
Except in such a page where Theseus' spouse
Over the pathless waves towards him bows.

XIII.

But, for the general award of love,
The little sweet doth kill much bitterness;
Though Dido silent is in under-grove,
And Isabella's was a great distress,
Though young Lorenzo in warm Indian clove
Was not embalm'd, this truth is not the less—
Even bees, the little almsmen of spring-bowers,
Know there is richest juice in poison-flowers.

XIV.

With her two brothers this fair lady dwelt,
Enriched from ancestral merchandize,
And for them many a weary hand did swelt
In torched mines and noisy factories,
And many once proud-quiver'd loins did melt
In blood from stinging whip;—with hollow eyes
Many all day in dazzling river stood,
To take the rich-ored driftings of the flood.

XV.

For them the Ceylon diver held his breath,
And went all naked to the hungry shark;
For them his ears gush'd blood; for them in death
The seal on the cold ice with piteous bark
Lay full of darts; for them alone did seethe
A thousand men in troubles wide and dark:
Half-ignorant, they turn'd an easy wheel,
That set sharp racks at work, to pinch and peel.

XVI.

Why were they proud? Because their marble founts
Gush'd with more pride than do a wretch's tears?—
Why were they proud? Because fair orange-mounts
Were of more soft ascent than lazar stairs?
Why were they proud? Because red-lined accounts
Were richer than the songs of Grecian years?
Why were they proud? again we ask aloud,
Why in the name of Glory were they proud?

XVII.

Yet were these Florentines as self-retired
In hungry pride and gainful cowardice,
As two close Hebrews in that land inspired,
Paled in and vineyarded from beggar-spies;
The hawks of ship-mast forests—the untired
And pannier'd mules for ducats and old lies—
Quick cat's-paws on the generous stray-away,—
Great wits in Spanish, Tuscan, and Malay.

XVIII.

How was it these same ledger-men could spy
Fair Isabella in her downy nest?
How could they find out in Lorenzo's eye
A straying from his toil? Hot Egypt's pest
Into their vision covetous and sly!
How could these money-bags see east and west?—
Yet so they did—and every dealer fair
Must see behind, as doth the hunted hare.

XIX.

O eloquent and famed Boccaccio!
Of thee we now should ask forgiving boon,
And of thy spicy myrtles as they blow,
And of thy roses amorous of the moon,
And of thy lilies, that do paler grow
Now they can no more hear thy ghittern's tune,
For venturing syllables that ill beseem
The quiet glooms of such a piteous theme.

XX.

Grant thou a pardon here, and then the tale
Shall move on soberly, as it is meet;
There is no other crime, no mad assail
To make old prose in modern rhyme more sweet:
But it is done—succeed the verse or fail—
To honour thee, and thy gone spirit greet;
To stead thee as a verse in English tongue,
An echo of thee in the north-wind sung.

XXI.

These brethren having found by many signs
What love Lorenzo for their sister had,
And how she loved him too, each unconfines
His bitter thoughts to other, well nigh mad
That he, the servant of their trade designs,
Should in their sister's love be blithe and glad,
When 't was their plan to coax her by degrees
To some high noble and his olive-trees.

XXII.

And many a jealous conference had they,
And many times they bit their lips alone,
Before they fix'd upon a surest way
To make the youngster for his crime atone;
And at the last, these men of cruel clay
Cut Mercy with a sharp knife to the bone;
For they resolved in some forest dim
To kill Lorenzo, and there bury him.

XXIII.

So on a pleasant morning, as he leant
Into the sun-rise, o'er the balustrade
Of the garden-terrace, towards him they bent
Their footing through the dews; and to him said,
«You seem there in the quiet of content,
Lorenzo, and we are most loth to invade
Calm speculation; but if you are wise,
Bestride your steed while cold is in the skies.

XXIV.

«To-day we purpose, ay, this hour we mount
To spur three leagues towards the Apennine;
Come down, we pray thee, ere the hot sun count
His dewy rosary on the eglantine.»
Lorenzo, courteously as he was wont,
Bow'd a fair greeting to these serpents' whine;
And went in haste, to get in readiness,
With belt, and spur, and bracing huntsman's dress.

XXV.

And as he to the court-yard pass'd along,
Each third step did he pause, and listen'd oft
If he could hear his lady's matin-song,
Or the light whisper of her footstep soft;
And as he thus over his passion hung,
He heard a laugh full musical aloft;
When, looking up, he saw her features bright
Smile through an in-door lattice, all delight.

XXVI.

«Love, Isabel!» said he, «I was in pain
Lest I should miss to bid thee a good morrow:
Ah! what if I should lose thee, when so fain
I am to stifle all the heavy sorrow
Of a poor three hours' absence? but we 'll gain
Out of the amorous dark what day doth borrow.
Good bye! I 'll soon be back.»—«Good bye!» said she:
And as he went she chanted merrily.

XXVII.

So the two brothers and their murder'd man
Rode past fair Florence, to where Arno's stream
Gurgles through straiten'd banks, and still doth fan
Itself with dancing bulrush, and the bream
Keeps head against the freshets. Sick and wan
The brothers' faces in the ford did seem,
Lorenzo's flush with love.—They pass'd the water
Into a forest quiet for the slaughter.

XXVIII.

There was Lorenzo slain and buried in,
There in that forest did his great love cease;
Ah! when a soul doth thus its freedom win,
It aches in loneliness—is ill at peace
As the break-covert blood-hounds of such sin:
They dipp'd their swords in the water, and did tease
Their horses homeward, with convulsed spur,
Each richer by his being a murderer.

XXIX.

They told their sister how, with sudden speed,
Lorenzo had ta'en ship for foreign lands,
Because of some great urgency and need
In their affairs, requiring trusty hands.
Poor Girl! put on thy stifling widow's weed,
And 'scape at once from Hope's accursed bands;
To-day thou wilt not see him, nor to-morrow,
And the next day will be a day of sorrow.

XXX.

She weeps alone for pleasures not to be;
Sorely she wept until the night came on,
And then, instead of love, O misery!
She brooded o'er the luxury alone:
His image in the dusk she seem'd to see,
And to the silence made a gentle moan,
Spreading her perfect arms upon the air,
And on her couch low murmuring, «Where? O where?»

XXXI.

But Selfishness, Love's cousin, held not long
Its fiery vigil in her single breast;
She fretted for the golden hour, and hung
Upon the time with feverish unrest—
Not long—for soon into her heart a throng
Of higher occupants, a richer zest,
Came tragic; passion not to be subdued,
And sorrow for her love in travels rude.

XXXII.

In the mid days of autumn, on their eves
The breath of Winter comes from far away,
And the sick west continually bereaves
Of some gold tinge, and plays a roundelay
Of death among the bushes and the leaves,
To make all bare before he dares to stray
From his north cavern. So sweet Isabel
By gradual decay from beauty fell,

XXXIII.

Because Lorenzo came not. Oftentimes
She ask'd her brothers, with an eye all pale,
Striving to be itself, what dungeon climes
Could keep him off so long? They spake a tale
Time after time, to quiet her. Their crimes
Came on them, like a smoke from Hinnom's vale;
And every night in dreams they groan'd aloud,
To see their sister in her snowy shroud.

XXXIV.

And she had died in drowsy ignorance,
But for a thing more deadly dark than all;
It came like a fierce potion, drunk by chance,
Which saves a sick man from the feather'd pall
For some few gasping moments; like a lance,
Waking an Indian from his cloudy hall
With cruel pierce, and bringing him again
Sense of the gnawing fire at heart and brain.

XXXV.

It was a vision.—In the drowsy gloom,
The dull of midnight, at her couch's foot
Lorenzo stood, and wept: the forest tomb
Had marr'd his glossy hair which once could shoot
Lustre into the sun, and put cold doom
Upon his lips, and taken the soft lute
From his lorn voice, and past his loamed ears
Had made a miry channel for his tears.

XXXVI.

Strange sound it was, when the pale shadow spake;
For there was striving, in its piteous tongue,
To speak as when on earth it was awake,
And Isabella on its music hung:
Languor there was in it, and tremulous shake,
As in a palsied Druid's harp unstrung;
And through it moan'd a ghostly under-song,
Like hoarse night-gusts sepulchral briars among.

XXXVII.

Its eyes, though wild, were still all dewy bright
With love, and kept all phantom fear aloof
From the poor girl by magic of their light,
The while it did unthread the horrid woof
Of the late darken'd time,—the murderous spite
Of pride and avarice,—the dark pine roof
In the forest,—and the sodden turfed dell,
Where, without any word, from stabs he fell.

XXXVIII.

Saying moreover, «Isabel, my sweet!
Red whortle-berries droop above my head,
And a large flint-stone weighs upon my feet;
Around me beeches and high chesnuts shed
Their leaves and prickly nuts; a sheep-fold bleat
Comes from beyond the river to my bed:
Go, shed one tear upon my heather-bloom,
And it shall comfort me within the tomb.

XXXIX.

«I am a shadow now, alas! alas!
Upon the skirts of human-nature dwelling
Alone: I chant alone the holy mass,
While little sounds of life are round me knelling,
And glossy bees at noon do fieldward pass,
And many a chapel bell the hour is telling,
Paining me through: those sounds grow strange to me,
And thou art distant in Humanity.

XL.

«I know what was, I feel full well what is,
And I should rage, if spirits could go mad;
Though I forget the taste of earthly bliss,
That paleness warms my grave, as though I had
A Seraph chosen from the bright abyss
To be my spouse: thy paleness makes me glad:
Thy beauty grows upon me, and I feel
A greater love through all my essence steal.»

XLI.

The Spirit mourn'd «Adieu!»—dissolved, and left
The atom darkness in a slow turmoil;
As when of healthful midnight sleep bereft,
Thinking on rugged hours and fruitless toil,
We put our eyes into a pillowy cleft,
And see the spangly gloom froth up and boil:
It made sad Isabella's eyelids ache,
And in the dawn she started up awake;

XLII.

«Ha! ha!» said she, «I knew not this hard life,
I thought the worst was simple misery;
I thought some Fate with pleasure or with strife
Portion'd us—happy days, or else to die;
But there is crime—a brother's bloody knife!
Sweet Spirit, thou hast school'd my infancy:
I'll visit thee for this, and kiss thine eyes,
And greet thee morn and even in the skies.»

XLIII.

When the full morning came, she had devised
How she might secret to the forest hie;
How she might find the clay, so dearly prized,
And sing to it one latest lullaby;
How her short absence might be unsurmised,
While she the inmost of the dream would try.
Resolved, she took with her an aged nurse,
And went into that dismal forest-hearse.

XLIV.

See, as they creep along the river side,
How she doth whisper to that aged Dame,
And, after looking round the champaign wide,
Shows her a knife.—«What feverous hectic flame
Burns in thee, child?—What good can thee betide,
That thou shouldst smile again?»—The evening came,
And they had found Lorenzo's earthy bed;
The flint was there, the berries at his head.

XLV.

Who hath not loiter'd in a green church-yard,
And let his spirit, like a demon-mole,
Work through the clayey soil and gravel hard,
To see scull, coffin'd bones, and funeral stole;
Pitying each form that hungry Death hath marr'd,
And filling it once more with human soul?
Ah! this is holiday to what was felt
When Isabella by Lorenzo knelt.

XLVI.

She gazed into the fresh-thrown mould, as though
One glance did fully all its secrets tell;
Clearly she saw, as other eyes would know
Pale limbs at bottom of a crystal well;
Upon the murderous spot she seem'd to grow,
Like to a native lily of the dell:
Then with her knife, all sudden, she began
To dig more fervently than misers can.

XLVII.

Soon she turn'd up a soiled glove, whereon
Her silk had play'd in purple phantasies;
She kiss'd it with a lip more chill than stone,
And put it in her bosom, where it dries
And freezes utterly unto the bone
Those dainties made to still an infant's cries:
Then 'gan she work again; nor stay'd her care,
But to throw back at times her veiling hair.

XLVIII.

That old nurse stood beside her wondering,
Until her heart felt pity to the core
At sight of such a dismal labouring,
And so she kneel'd, with her locks all hoar,
And put her lean hands to the horrid thing:
Three hours they labour'd at this travail sore;
At last they felt the kernel of the grave,
And Isabella did not stamp and rave.

XLIX.

Ah! wherefore all this wormy circumstance?
Why linger at the yawning tomb so long?
O for the gentleness of old Romance,
The simple plaining of a minstrel's song!
Fair reader, at the old tale take a glance,
For here, in truth, it doth not well belong
To speak:—O turn thee to the very tale,
And taste the music of that vision pale.

L.

With duller steel than the Perséan sword
They cut away no formless monster's head,
But one, whose gentleness did well accord
With death, as life. The ancient harps have said,
Love never dies, but lives, immortal Lord:
If Love impersonate was ever dead,
Pale Isabella kiss'd it, and low moan'd.
'T was love; cold,—dead indeed, but not dethroned.

LI.

In anxious secrecy they took it home,
And then the prize was all for Isabel:
She calm'd its wild hair with a golden comb,
And all around each eye's sepulchral cell
Pointed each fringed lash; the smeared loam
With tears, as chilly as a dripping well,
She drench'd away:—and still she comb'd, and kept
Sighing all day—and still she kiss'd, and wept.

LII.

Then in a silken scarf,—sweet with the dews
Of precious flowers pluck'd in Araby,
And divine liquids come with odorous ooze
Through the cold serpent-pipe refreshfully,—
She wrapp'd it up; and for its tomb did chuse
A garden-pot, wherein she laid it by,
And cover'd it with mould, and o'er it set
Sweet Basil, which her tears kept ever wet.

LIII.

And she forgot the stars, the moon, and sun,
And she forgot the blue above the trees,
And she forgot the dells where waters run,
And she forgot the chilly autumn breeze;
She had no knowledge when the day was done,
And the new morn she saw not: but in peace
Hung over her sweet Basil evermore,
And moisten'd it with tears unto the core.

LIV.

And so she ever fed it with thin tears,
Whence thick, and green, and beautiful it grew,
So that it smelt more balmy than its peers
Of Basil-tufts in Florence; for it drew
Nurture besides, and life, from human fears,
From the fast mouldering head there shut from view:
So that the jewel, safely casketed,
Came forth, and in perfumed leafits spread.

LV.

O Melancholy, linger here awhile!
O Music, Music, breathe despondingly!
O Echo, Echo, from some sombre isle,
Unknown, Lethean, sigh to us—O sigh!
Spirits in grief, lift up your heads, and smile;
Lift up your heads, sweet Spirits, heavily,
And make a pale light in your cypress glooms,
Tinting with silver wan your marble tombs.

LVI.

Moan hither, all ye syllables of woe,
From the deep throat of sad Melpomene!
Through bronzed lyre in tragic order go,
And touch the strings into a mystery;
Sound mournfully upon the winds and low;
For simple Isabel is soon to be
Among the dead: She withers, like a palm
Cut by an Indian for its juicy balm.

LVII.

O leave the palm to wither by itself;
Let not quick Winter chill its dying hour!—
It may not be—those Baälites of pelf,
Her brethren, noted the continual shower
From her dead eyes; and many a curious elf,
Among her kindred, wonder'd that such dower
Of youth and beauty should be thrown aside
By one mark'd out to be a Noble's bride.

LVIII.

And, furthermore, her brethren wonder'd much
Why she sat drooping by the Basil green,
And why it flourish'd, as by magic touch;
Greatly they wonder'd what the thing might mean:
They could not surely give belief, that such
A very nothing would have power to wean
Her from her own fair youth, and pleasures gay,
And even remembrance of her love's delay.

LIX.

Therefore they watch'd a time when they might sift
This hidden whim; and long they watch'd in vain;
For seldom did she go to chapel-shrift,
And seldom felt she any hunger-pain;
And when she left, she hurried back, as swift
As bird on wing to breast its eggs again;
And, patient as a hen-bird, sat her there
Beside her Basil, weeping through her hair.

LX.

Yet they contrived to steal the Basil-pot,
And to examine it in secret place:
The thing was vile with green and livid spot,
And yet they knew it was Lorenzo's face:
The guerdon of their murder they had got,
And so left Florence in a moment's space,
Never to turn again.—Away they went,
With blood upon their heads, to banishment.

LXI.

O Melancholy, turn thine eyes away!
O Music, Music, breathe despondingly!
O Echo, Echo, on some other day,
From isles Lethean, sigh to us—O sigh!
Spirits of grief, sing not your "Well-a-way!"
For Isabel, sweet Isabel, will die;
Will die a death too lone and incomplete,
Now they have ta'en away her Basil sweet.

LXII.

Piteous she look'd on dead and senseless things,
Asking for her lost Basil amorously;
And with melodious chuckle in the strings
Of her lorn voice, she oftentimes would cry
After the Pilgrim in his wanderings,
To ask him where her Basil was; and why
'T was hid from her: "For cruel 't is," said she,
"To steal my Basil-pot away from me."

LXIII.

And so she pined, and so she died forlorn,
Imploring for her Basil to the last.
No heart was there in Florence but did mourn
In pity of her love, so overcast.
And a sad ditty of this story born
From mouth to mouth through all the country pass'd:
Still is the burthen sung—"O cruelty,
To steal my Basil-pot away from me!"

The Eve of St Agnes.

I.

St Agnes' Eve—Ah, bitter chill it was!
The owl, for all his feathers, was a-cold;
The hare limp'd trembling through the frozen grass,
And silent was the flock in woolly fold:
Numb were the Beadsman's fingers, while he told
His rosary, and while his frosted breath,
Like pious incense from a censer old,
Seem'd taking flight for heaven, without a death,
Past the sweet Virgin's picture, while his prayer he saith.

II.

His prayer he saith, this patient, holy man;
Then takes his lamp, and riseth from his knees,
And back returneth, meagre, barefoot, wan,
Along the chapel aisle by slow degrees:
The sculptured dead, on each side, seem to freeze,
Emprison'd in black, purgatorial rails:
Knights, ladies, praying in dumb orat'ries,
He passeth by; and his weak spirit fails
To think how they may ache in icy hoods and mails.

III.

Northward he turneth through a little door,
And scarce three steps, ere Music's golden tongue
Flatter'd to tears this aged man and poor;
But no—already had his death-bell rung;
The joys of all his life were said and sung:
His was harsh penance on St Agnes' Eve:
Another way he went, and soon among
Rough ashes sat he for his soul's reprieve,
And all night kept awake, for sinners' sake to grieve.

IV.

That ancient Beadsman heard the prelude soft;
And so it chanced, for many a door was wide,
From hurry to and fro. Soon, up aloft,
The silver, snarling trumpets 'gan to chide:
The level chambers, ready with their pride,
Were glowing to receive a thousand guests:
The carved angels, ever eager-eyed,
Stared, where upon their heads the cornice rests,
With hair blown back, and wings put cross-wise on their breasts.

V.

At-length burst in the argent revelry,
With plume, tiara, and all rich array,
Numerous as shadows haunting fairily
The brain, new stuff'd, in youth, with triumphs gay
Of old romance. These let us wish away,
And turn, sole-thoughted, to one Lady there,
Whose heart had brooded, all that wintry day,
On love, and wing'd St Agnes' saintly care,
As she had heard old dames full many times declare.

VI.

They told her how, upon St Agnes' Eve,
Young virgins might have visions of delight,
And soft adorings from their loves receive
Upon the honey'd middle of the night,
If ceremonies due they did aright;
As, supperless to bed they must retire,
And couch supine their beauties, lily white;
Nor look behind, nor sideways, but require
Of Heaven with upward eyes for all that they desire.

VII.

Full of this whim was thoughtful Madeline:
The music, yearning like a God in pain,
She scarcely heard: her maiden eyes divine,
Fix'd on the floor, saw many a sweeping train
Pass by—she heeded not at all: in vain
Came many a tiptoe, amorous cavalier,
And back retired; not cool'd by high disdain,
But she saw not: her heart was otherwhere:
She sigh'd for Agnes' dreams, the sweetest of the year.

VIII.

She danced along with vague, regardless eyes,
Anxious her lips, her breathing quick and short:
The hallow'd hour was near at hand: she sighs
Amid the timbrels, and the throng'd resort
Of whisperers in anger, or in sport;
'Mid looks of love, defiance, hate, and scorn,
Hoodwink'd with faery fancy; all amort,
Save to St Agnes and her lambs unshorn,
And all the bliss to be before to-morrow morn.

IX.

So, purposing each moment to retire,
She linger'd still. Meantime, across the moors,
Had come young Porphyro, with heart on fire
For Madeline. Beside the portal doors,
Buttress'd from moonlight, stands he, and implores
All saints to give him sight of Madeline,
But for one moment in the tedious hours,
That he might gaze and worship all unseen;
Perchance speak, kneel, touch, kiss—in sooth such things have been.

X.

He ventures in: let no buzz'd whisper tell:
All eyes be muffled, or a hundred swords
Will storm his heart, Love's fev'rous citadel:
For him, those chambers held barbarian hordes,
Hyena foemen, and hot-blooded lords,
Whose very dogs would execrations howl
Against his lineage: not one breast affords
Him any mercy, in that mansion foul,
Save one old beldame, weak in body and in soul.

XI.

Ah, happy chance! the aged creature came,
Shuffling along with ivory-headed wand,
To where he stood, hid from the torch's flame,
Behind a broad hall-pillar, far beyond
The sound of merriment and chorus bland:
He startled her; but soon she knew his face,
And grasp'd his fingers in her palsied hand,
Saying, « Mercy, Porphyro! hie thee from this place;
They are all here to-night, the whole blood-thirsty race!

XII.

« Get hence! get hence! there 's dwarfish Hildebrand;
He had a fever late, and in the fit
He cursed thee and thine, both house and land:
Then there 's that old Lord Maurice, not a whit
More tame for his grey hairs—Alas me! flit!
Flit like a ghost away.»—« Ah, Gossip dear,
We 're safe enough; here in this arm-chair sit,
And tell me how»—« Good Saints! not here, not here;
Follow me, child, or else these stones will be thy bier.»

XIII.

He follow'd through a lowly arched way,
Brushing the cobwebs with his lofty plume,
And as she mutter'd « Well-a—well-a-day!»
He found him in a little moonlight room,
Pale, latticed, chill, and silent as a tomb.
« Now tell me where is Madeline,» said he,
« O tell me, Angela, by the holy loom
Which none but secret sisterhood may see,
When they St Agnes' wool are weaving piously.»

XIV.

« St Agnes! Ah! it is St Agnes' Eve—
Yet men will murder upon holy days:
Thou must hold water in a witch's sieve,
And be liege-lord of all the Elves and Fays,
To venture so: it fills me with amaze
To see thee, Porphyro!—St Agnes' Eve!
God's help! my lady fair the conjuror plays
This very night: good angels her deceive!
But let me laugh awhile, I 've mickle time to grieve.»

XV.

Feebly she laugheth in the languid moon,
While Porphyro upon her face doth look,
Like puzzled urchin on an aged crone
Who keepeth closed a wond'rous riddle-book,
As spectacled she sits in chimney nook.
But soon his eyes grew brilliant, when she told
His lady's purpose; and he scarce could brook
Tears, at the thought of those enchantments cold,
And Madeline asleep in lap of legends old.

XVI.

Sudden a thought came like a full-blown rose,
Flushing his brow, and in his pained heart
Made purple riot: then doth he propose
A stratagem, that makes the beldame start:
"A cruel man and impious thou art:
Sweet lady, let her pray, and sleep, and dream
Alone with her good angels, far apart
From wicked men like thee. Go, go!—I deem
Thou canst not surely be the same that thou didst seem."

XVII.

"I will not harm her, by all saints I swear,"
Quoth Porphyro: "O may I ne'er find grace
When my weak voice shall whisper its last prayer,
If one of her soft ringlets I displace,
Or look with ruffian passion in her face:
Good Angela, believe me by these tears;
Or I will, even in a moment's space,
Awake, with horrid shout, my foemen's ears,
And beard them, though they be more fang'd than wolves and bears."

XVIII.

"Ah! why wilt thou affright a feeble soul?
A poor, weak, palsy-stricken, churchyard thing,
Whose passing-bell may ere the midnight toll;
Whose prayers for thee, each morn and evening,
Were never miss'd."—Thus plaining, doth she bring
A gentler speech from burning Porphyro;
So woeful, and of such deep sorrowing,
That Angela gives promise she will do
Whatever he shall wish, betide her weal or woe.

XIX.

Which was, to lead him, in close secrecy,
Even to Madeline's chamber, and there hide
Him in a closet, of such privacy
That he might see her beauty unespied,
And win perhaps that night a peerless bride,
While legion'd fairies paced the coverlet,
And pale enchantment held her sleepy-eyed.
Never on such a night have lovers met,
Since Merlin paid his Demon all the monstrous debt.

XX.

"It shall be as thou wishest," said the Dame:
"All cates and dainties shall be stored there
Quickly on this feast-night: by the tambour frame
Her own lute thou wilt see: no time to spare,
For I am slow and feeble, and scarce dare
On such a catering trust my dizzy head.
Wait here, my child, with patience; kneel in prayer
The while: Ah! thou must needs the lady wed,
Or may I never leave my grave among the dead."

XXI.

So saying she hobbled off with busy fear.
The lover's endless minutes slowly pass'd;
The dame return'd, and whisper'd in his ear
To follow her; with aged eyes aghast
From fright of dim espial. Safe at last,
Through many a dusky gallery, they gain
The maiden's chamber, silken, hush'd, and chaste;
Where Porphyro took covert, pleased amain.
His poor guide hurried back with agues in her brain.

XXII.

Her fault'ring hand upon the balustrade,
Old Angela was feeling for the stair,
When Madeline, St Agnes' charmed maid,
Rose, like a mission'd spirit, unaware:
With silver taper's light, and pious care,
She turn'd, and down the aged gossip led
To a safe level matting. Now prepare,
Young Porphyro, for gazing on that bed;
She comes, she comes again, like ring-dove fray'd and fled.

XXIII.

Out went the taper as she hurried in;
Its little smoke, in pallid moonshine, died:
She closed the door, she panted, all akin
To spirits of the air, and visions wide:
No uttered syllable, or, woe betide!
But to her heart, her heart was voluble,
Paining with eloquence her balmy side;
As though a tongueless nightingale should swell
Her throat in vain, and die, heart-stifled, in her dell.

XXIV.

A casement high and triple-arch'd there was,
All garlanded with carven imageries
Of fruits, and flowers, and bunches of knot-grass,
And diamonded with panes of quaint device,
Innumerable of stains and splendid dyes,
As are the tiger-moth's deep-damask'd wings;
And in the 'midst, 'mong thousand heraldries,
And twilight saints, and dim emblazonings,
A shielded scutcheon blush'd with blood of queens and kings.

XXV.

Full on this casement shone the wintry moon,
And threw warm gules on Madeline's fair breast,
As down she knelt for heaven's grace and boon;
Rose-bloom fell on her hands, together prest,
And on her silver cross soft amethyst,
And on her hair a glory, like a saint:
She seem'd a splendid angel, newly drest,
Save wings, for heaven:—Porphyro grew faint:
She knelt, so pure a thing, so free from mortal taint.

XXVI.

Anon his heart revives: her vespers done,
Of all its wreathed pearls her hair she frees;
Unclasps her warmed jewels one by one;
Loosens her fragrant boddice; by degrees
Her rich attire creeps rustling to her knees:
Half-hidden, like a mermaid in sea-weed,
Pensive awhile she dreams awake, and sees,
In fancy, fair St Agnes in her bed,
But dares not look behind, or all the charm is fled.

XXVII.

Soon, trembling in her soft and chilly nest,
In sort of wakeful swoon, perplex'd she lay,
Until the poppied warmth of sleep oppress'd
Her soothed limbs, and soul fatigued away;
Flown, like a thought, until the morrow-day;
Blissfully haven'd both from joy and pain;
Clasp'd like a missal where swart Paynims pray;
Blinded alike from sunshine and from rain,
As though a rose should shut, and be a bud again.

XXVIII.

Stol'n to this paradise, and so entranced,
Porphyro gazed upon her empty dress,
And listen'd to her breathing, if it chanced
To wake into a slumberous tenderness;
Which when he heard, that minute did he bless,
And breathed himself: then from the closet crept,
Noiseless as fear in a wide wilderness,
And over the hush'd carpet, silent, stept,
And 'tween the curtains peep'd, where, lo!—how fast she slept.

XXIX.

Then by the bed-side, where the faded moon
Made a dim, silver twilight, soft he set
A table, and, half anguish'd, threw thereon
A cloth of woven crimson, gold, and jet:—
O for some drowsy Morphean amulet!
The boisterous, midnight, festive clarion,
The kettle-drum, and far-heard clarionet,
Affray his ears, though but in dying tone;—
The hall-door shuts again, and all the noise is gone.

XXX.

And still she slept an azure-lidded sleep,
In blanched linen, smooth, and lavender'd,
While he from forth the closet brought a heap
Of candied apple, quince, and plum, and gourd;
With jellies soother than the creamy curd,
And lucent syrops, tinct with cinnamon;
Manna and dates, in argosy transferr'd
From Fez; and spiced dainties, every one,
From silken Samarcand to cedar'd Lebanon.

XXXI.

These delicates he heap'd with glowing hand
On golden dishes and in baskets bright
Of wreathed silver: sumptuous they stand
In the retired quiet of the night,
Filling the chilly room with perfume light.—
"And now, my love, my seraph fair, awake!
Thou art my heaven, and I thine eremite:
Open thine eyes, for meek St Agnes' sake,
Or I shall drowse beside thee, so my soul doth ache."

XXXII.

Thus whispering, his warm, unnerved arm
Sank in her pillow. Shaded was her dream
By the dusk curtains:—'t was a midnight charm
Impossible to melt as iced stream:
The lustrous salvers in the moonlight gleam;
Broad golden fringe upon the carpet lies:
It seem'd he never, never could redeem
From such a stedfast spell his lady's eyes;
So mused awhile, entoil'd in woofed phantasies.

XXXIII.

Awakening up, he took her hollow lute,—
Tumultuous,—and, in chords that tenderest be,
He play'd an ancient ditty, long since mute,
In Provence call'd, "La belle dame sans mercy:"
Close to her ear touching the melody;—
Wherewith disturb'd, she utter'd a soft moan:
He ceased—she panted quick—and suddenly
Her blue affrayed eyes wide open shone:
Upon his knees he sank, pale as smooth-sculptured stone.

XXXIV.

Her eyes were open, but she still beheld,
Now wide awake, the vision of her sleep:
There was a painful change, that nigh expell'd
The blisses of her dream so pure and deep.
At which fair Madeline began to weep,
And moan forth witless words with many a sigh;
While still her gaze on Porphyro would keep;
Who knelt, with joined hands and piteous eye,
Fearing to move or speak, she look'd so dreamingly.

XXXV.

"Ah, Porphyro!" said she, "but even now
Thy voice was at sweet tremble in mine ear,
Made tuneable with every sweetest vow;
And those sad eyes were spiritual and clear:
How chang'd thou art! how pallid, chill, and drear!
Give me that voice again, my Porphyro,
Those looks immortal, those complainings dear!
Oh leave me not in this eternal woe,
For if thou diest, my Love, I know not where to go."

XXXVI.

Beyond a mortal man impassion'd far
At these voluptuous accents, he arose,
Ethereal, flush'd, and like a throbbing star
Seen 'mid the sapphire heaven's deep repose;
Into her dream he melted, as the rose
Blendeth its odour with the violet,—
Solution sweet: meantime the frost-wind blows
Like Love's alarum pattering the sharp sleet
Against the window-panes; St Agnes' moon hath set.

XXXVII.

'T is dark: quick pattereth the flaw-blown sleet:
"This is no dream, my bride, my Madeline!"
'T is dark: the iced gusts still rave and beat:
"No dream, alas! alas! and woe is mine!
Porphyro will leave me here to fade and pine.—
Cruel! what traitor could thee hither bring?
I curse not, for my heart is lost in thine,
Though thou forsakest a deceived thing;—
A dove forlorn and lost with sick unpruned wing."

XXXVIII.

"My Madeline! sweet dreamer! lovely bride!
Say, may I be for aye thy vassal blest?
Thy beauty's shield, heart-shaped and vermeil dyed?
Ah, silver shrine, here will I take my rest
After so many hours of toil and quest,
A famish'd pilgrim,—saved by miracle.
Though I have found, I will not rob thy nest
Saving of thy sweet self; if thou think'st well
To trust, fair Madeline, to no rude infidel."

XXXIX.

"Hark! 't is an elfin-storm from faery land,
Of haggard seeming, but a boon indeed:
Arise—arise! the morning is at hand;—
The bloated wassailers will never heed:—
Let us away, my love, with happy speed;
There are no ears to hear, or eyes to see,—
Drown'd all in Rhenish and the sleepy mead:
Awake! arise! my love, and fearless be,
For o'er the southern moors I have a home for thee."

XL.

She hurried at his words, beset with fears,
For there were sleeping dragons all around,
At glaring watch, perhaps, with ready spears—
Down the wide stairs a darkling way they found,—
In all the house was heard no human sound.
A chain-droop'd lamp was flickering by each door;
The arras, rich with horseman, hawk, and hound,
Flutter'd in the besieging wind's uproar;
And the long carpets rose along the gusty floor.

XLI.

They glide, like phantoms, into the wide hall;
Like phantoms to the iron porch they glide,
Where lay the Porter, in uneasy sprawl,
With a huge empty flaggon by his side:
The wakeful bloodhound rose, and shook his hide,
But his sagacious eye an inmate owns:
By one, and one, the bolts full easy slide:—
The chains lie silent on the footworn stones;
The key turns, and the door upon its hinges groans.

XLII.

And they are gone: ay, ages long ago
These lovers fled away into the storm.
That night the Baron dreamt of many a woe,
And all his warrior-guests, with shade and form
Of witch, and demon, and large coffin-worm,
Were long be-nightmared. Angela the old
Died palsy-twitch'd, with meagre face deform;
The Beadsman, after thousand aves told,
For aye unsought-for slept among his ashes cold.

Hyperion.[1]

BOOK I.

Deep in the shady sadness of a vale
Far sunken from the healthy breath of morn,
Far from the fiery noon, and eve's one star,
Sat grey-hair'd Saturn, quiet as a stone,
Still as the silence round about his lair;
Forest on forest hung about his head
Like cloud on cloud. No stir of air was there,
Not so much life as on a summer's day
Robs not one light seed from the feather'd grass,
But where the dead leaf fell, there did it rest.
A stream went voiceless by, still deadened more
By reason of his fallen divinity
Spreading a shade: the Naiad 'mid her reeds
Press'd her cold finger closer to her lips.

Along the margin-sand large foot-marks went,
No further than to where his feet had stray'd,
And slept there since. Upon the sodden ground
His old right hand lay nerveless, listless, dead,
Unsceptred; and his realmless eyes where closed;
While his bow'd head seem'd listening to the Earth,
His ancient mother, for some comfort yet.

It seem'd no force could wake him from his place;
But there came one, who with a kindred hand
Touch'd his wide shoulders, after bending low
With reverence, though to one who knew it not.
She was a Goddess of the infant world;
By her in stature the tall Amazon
Had stood a pigmy's height: she would have ta'en
Achilles by the hair and bent his neck;
Or with a finger stay'd Ixion's wheel.
Her face was large as that of Memphian sphinx,
Pedestal'd haply in a palace-court,
When sages look'd to Egypt for their lore.
But oh! how unlike marble was that face:
How beautiful, if sorrow had not made
Sorrow more beautiful than Beauty's self.
There was a listening fear in her regard,
As if calamity had but begun;
As if the vanward clouds of evil days
Had spent their malice, and the sullen rear
Was with its stored thunder labouring up.
One hand she press'd upon that aching spot
Where beats the human heart, as if just there,
Though an immortal, she felt cruel pain:
The other upon Saturn's bended neck
She laid, and to the level of his ear
Leaning with parted lips, some words she spake
In solemn tenour and deep organ tone:
Some mourning words, which in our feeble tongue
Would come in these like accents; O how frail
To that large utterance of the early Gods!
"Saturn, look up!—though wherefore, poor old King?
I have no comfort for thee, no not one:
I cannot say, 'O wherefore sleepest thou?'
For heaven is parted from thee, and the earth
Knows thee not, thus afflicted, for a God;
And ocean too, with all its solemn noise,
Has from thy sceptre pass'd; and all the air
Is emptied of thine hoary majesty.
Thy thunder, conscious of the new command,
Rumbles reluctant o'er our fallen house;
And thy sharp lightning in unpractised hands
Scorches and burns our once serene domain.
O aching time! O moments big as years!
All as ye pass swell out the monstrous truth,
And press it so upon our weary griefs
That unbelief has not a space to breathe.
Saturn, sleep on:—O thoughtless, why did I
Thus violate thy slumbrous solitude?
Why should I ope thy melancholy eyes?
Saturn, sleep on! while at thy feet I weep."

[1] If any apology be thought necessary for the appearance of the unfinished poem of Hyperion, the publishers beg to state that they alone are responsible, as it was printed at their particular request, and contrary to the wish of the author. The poem was intended to have been of equal length with Endymion, but the reception given to that work discouraged the author from proceeding.

As when, upon a tranced summer-night,
Those green-robed senators of mighty woods,
Tall oaks, branch-charm'd by the earnest stars,
Dream, and so dream all night without a stir,
Save from one gradual solitary gust
Which comes upon the silence, and dies off,
As if the ebbing air had but one wave:
So came these words and went; the while in tears
She touch'd her fair large forehead to the ground,
Just where her falling hair might be outspread
A soft and silken mat for Saturn's feet.
One moon, with alteration slow, had shed
Her silver seasons four upon the night,
And still these two were postured motionless,
Like natural sculpture in cathedral cavern;
The frozen God still couchant on the earth,
And the sad Goddess weeping at his feet:
Until at length old Saturn lifted up
His faded eyes, and saw his kingdom gone,
And all the gloom and sorrow of the place,
And that fair kneeling Goddess; and then spake
As with a palsied tongue, and while his beard
Shook horrid with such aspen-malady:
« O tender spouse of gold Hyperion,
Thea, I feel thee ere I see thy face;
Look up, and let me see our doom in it;
Look up, and tell me if this feeble shape
Is Saturn's; tell me, if thou hear'st the voice
Of Saturn; tell me, if this wrinkling brow,
Naked and bare of its great diadem,
Peers like the front of Saturn. Who had power
To make me desolate? whence came the strength?
How was it nurtured to such bursting forth,
While Fate seem'd strangled in my nervous grasp?
But it is so; and I am smother'd up,
And buried from all godlike exercise
Of influence benign on planets pale,
Of admonitions to the winds and seas,
Of peaceful sway above man's harvesting,
And all those acts which Deity supreme
Doth ease its heart of love in.—I am gone
Away from my own bosom: I have left
My strong identity, my real self,
Somewhere between the throne, and where I sit
Here on this spot of earth. Search, Thea, search!
Open thine eyes eterne, and sphere them round
Upon all space: space starr'd, and lorn of light:
Space region'd with life-air; and barren void;
Spaces of fire, and all the yawn of hell.—
Search, Thea, search! and tell me, if thou seest
A certain shape or shadow, making way
With wings or chariot fierce to repossess
A heaven he lost erewhile: it must—it must
Be of ripe progress—Saturn must be King.
Yes, there must be a golden victory;
There must be Gods thrown down, and trumpets blown
Of triumph calm, and hymns of festival
Upon the gold clouds metropolitan,
Voices of soft proclaim, and silver stir
Of strings in hollow shells; and there shall be
Beautiful things made new, for the surprise
Of the sky-children; I will give command:
Thea! Thea! Thea! where is Saturn?»

This passion lifted him upon his feet,
And made his hands to struggle in the air,
His Druid locks to shake and ooze with sweat,
His eyes to fever out, his voice to cease.
He stood, and heard not Thea's sobbing deep;
A little time, and then again he snatch'd
Utterance thus:—« But cannot I create?
Cannot I form? Cannot I fashion forth
Another world, another universe,
To overbear and crumble this to nought?
Where is another chaos? Where?»—That word
Found way unto Olympus, and made quake
The rebel three.—Thea was startled up,
And in her bearing was a sort of hope,
As thus she quick-voiced spake, yet full of awe.

« This cheers our fallen house: come to our friends,
O Saturn! come away, and give them heart;
I know the covert, for thence came I hither.»
Thus brief; then with beseeching eyes she went
With backward footing through the shade a space:
He follow'd, and she turn'd to lead the way
Through aged boughs, that yielded like the mist
Which eagles cleave, upmounting from their nest.

Meanwhile in other realms big tears were shed,
More sorrow like to this, and such like woe,
Too huge for mortal tongue or pen of scribe:
The Titans fierce, self-hid, or prison-bound,
Groan'd for the old allegiance once more,
And listen'd in sharp pain for Saturn's voice.
But one of the whole mammoth-brood still kept
His sov'reignty, and rule, and majesty;—
Blazing Hyperion on his orbed fire
Still sat, still snuff'd the incense, teeming up
From man to the sun's God; yet unsecure:
For as among us mortals omens drear
Fright and perplex, so also shudder'd he—
Not at dog's howl, or gloom-bird's hated screech,
Or the familiar visiting of one
Upon the first toll of his passing-bell,
Or prophecyings of the midnight lamp;
But horrors, portion'd to a giant nerve,
Oft made Hyperion ache. His palace bright,
Bastion'd with pyramids of glowing gold,
And touch'd with shade of bronzed obelisks,
Glared a blood-red through all its thousand courts,
Arches, and domes, and fiery galleries;
And all its curtains of Aurorian clouds
Flush'd angerly: while sometimes eagles' wings,
Unseen before by Gods or wondering men,
Darken'd the place; and neighing steeds were heard,
Not heard before by Gods or wondering men.
Also, when he would taste the spicy wreaths
Of incense, breathed aloft from sacred hills,
Instead of sweets, his ample palate took
Savour of poisonous brass and metal sick:
And so, when harbour'd in the sleepy west,
After the full completion of fair day,—
For rest divine upon exalted couch,
And slumber in the arms of melody,
He paced away the pleasant hours of ease
With stride colossal, on from hall to hall;
While far within each aisle and deep recess,
His winged minions in close clusters stood,
Amazed and full of fear; like anxious men
Who on wide plains gather in panting troops,
When earthquakes jar their battlements and towers.
Even now, while Saturn, roused from icy trance,

Went step for step with Thea through the woods,
Hyperion, leaving twilight in the rear,
Came slope upon the threshold of the west;
Then, as was wont, his palace-door flew ope
In smoothed silence, save what solemn tubes,
Blown by the serious Zephyrs, gave of sweet
And wandering sounds, slow-breathed melodies;
And like a rose in vermeil tint and shape,
In fragrance soft, and coolness to the eye,
That inlet to severe magnificence
Stood full blown, for the God to enter in.

He enter'd, but he enter'd full of wrath;
His flaming robes stream'd out beyond his heels,
And gave a roar, as if of earthly fire,
That scared away the meek ethereal Hours
And made their dove-wings tremble. On he flared,
From stately nave to nave, from vault to vault,
Through bowers of fragrant and enwreathed light,
And diamond-paved lustrous long arcades,
Until he reach'd the great main cupola;
There standing fierce beneath, he stampt his foot,
And from the basements deep to the high towers
Jarr'd his own golden region; and before
The quavering thunder thereupon had ceased,
His voice leapt out, despite of godlike curb,
To this result: "O dreams of day and night!
O monstrous forms! O effigies of pain!
O spectres busy in a cold, cold gloom!
O lank-ear'd Phantoms of black-weeded pools!
Why do I know ye? why have I seen ye? why
Is my eternal essence thus distraught
To see and to behold these horrors new?
Saturn is fallen, am I too to fall?
Am I to leave this haven of my rest,
This cradle of my glory, this soft clime,
This calm luxuriance of blissful light,
These crystalline pavilions, and pure fanes,
Of all my lucent empire? It is left
Deserted, void, nor any haunt of mine.
The blaze, the splendour, and the symmetry,
I cannot see—but darkness, death and darkness.
Even here, into my centre of repose,
The shady visions come to domineer,
Insult, and blind, and stifle up my pomp—
Fall!—No, by Tellus and her briny robes!
Over the fiery frontier of my realms
I will advance a terrible right arm
Shall scare that infant thunderer, rebel Jove,
And bid old Saturn take his throne again."—
He spake, and ceased, the while a heavier threat
Held struggle with his throat, but came not forth;
For as in theatres of crowded men
Hubbub increases more they call out "Hush!"
So at Hyperion's words the Phantoms pale
Bestirr'd themselves, thrice horrible and cold;
And from the mirror'd level where he stood
A mist arose, as from a scummy marsh.
At this, through all his bulk an agony
Crept gradual, from the feet unto the crown,
Like a lithe serpent vast and muscular
Making slow way, with head and neck convulsed
From over-strained might. Released, he fled
To the eastern gates, and full six dewy hours
Before the dawn in season due should blush,
He breathed fierce breath against the sleepy portals,
Clear'd them of heavy vapours, burst them wide
Suddenly on the ocean's chilly streams.
The planet orb of fire, whereon he rode
Each day from east to west the heavens through,
Spun round in sable curtaining of clouds;
Not therefore veiled quite, blindfold, and hid,
But ever and anon the glancing spheres,
Circles, and arcs, and broad-belting colure,
Glow'd through, and wrought upon the muffling dark
Sweet-shaped lightnings from the nadir deep
Up to the zenith,—hieroglyphics old,
Which sages and keen-eyed astrologers
Then living on the earth, with labouring thought
Won from the gaze of many centuries:
Now lost, save what we find on remnants huge
Of stone, or marble swart; their import gone,
Their wisdom long since fled.—Two wings this orb
Possess'd for glory, two fair argent wings,
Ever exalted at the God's approach:
And now, from forth the gloom their plumes immense
Rose, one by one, till all outspreaded were;
While still the dazzling globe maintain'd eclipse,
Awaiting for Hyperion's command.
Fain would he have commanded, fain took throne
And bid the day begin, if but for change.
He might not:—No, though a primeval God:
The sacred seasons might not be disturb'd.
Therefore the operations of the dawn
Stay'd in their birth, even as here 't is told.
Those silver wings expanded sisterly,
Eager to sail their orb; the porches wide
Open'd upon the dusk demesnes of night;
And the bright Titan, frenzied with new woes,
Unused to bend, by hard compulsion bent
His spirit to the sorrow of the time;
And all along a dismal rack of clouds,
Upon the boundaries of day and night,
He stretch'd himself in grief and radiance faint.
There as he lay, the Heaven with its stars
Look'd down on him with pity, and the voice
Of Cœlus, from the universal space,
Thus whisper'd low and solemn in his ear.
"O brightest of my children dear, earth-born
And sky-engender'd, Son of Mysteries!
All unrevealed even to the powers
Which met at thy creating! at whose joys
And palpitations sweet, and pleasures soft,
I, Cœlus, wonder, how they came and whence;
And at the fruits thereof what shapes they be,
Distinct, and visible; symbols divine,
Manifestations of that beauteous life
Diffused unseen throughout eternal space;
Of these new-form'd art thou, oh brightest child!
Of these, thy brethren and the Goddesses!
There is sad feud among ye, and rebellion
Of son against his sire. I saw him fall,
I saw my first-born tumbled from his throne!
To me his arms were spread, to me his voice
Found way from forth the thunders round his head!
Pale wox I, and in vapours hid my face.
Art thou, too, near such doom? vague fear there is:
For I have seen my sons most unlike Gods.
Divine ye were created, and divine
In sad demeanour, solemn, undisturb'd,
Unruffled, like high Gods, ye lived and ruled:
Now I behold in you fear, hope, and wrath;

Actions of rage and passion; even as
I see them, on the mortal world beneath,
In men who die.—This is the grief, O Son!
Sad sign of ruin, sudden dismay, and fall!
Yet do thou strive; as thou art capable,
As thou canst move about, an evident God;
And canst oppose to each malignant hour
Ethereal presence:—I am but a voice;
My life is but the life of winds and tides,
No more than winds and tides can I avail:—
But thou canst.—Be thou therefore in the van
Of circumstance; yea, seize the arrow's barb
Before the tense string murmur.—To the earth!
For there thou wilt find Saturn, and his woes.
Meantime I will keep watch on thy bright sun,
And of thy seasons be a careful nurse.»—
Ere half this region-whisper had come down,
Hyperion arose, and on the stars
Lifted his curved lids, and kept them wide
Until it ceased; and still he kept them wide:
And still they were the same bright, patient stars.
Then with a slow incline of his broad breast,
Like to a diver in the pearly seas,
Forward he stoop'd over the airy shore,
And plunged all noiseless into the deep night.

BOOK II.

Just at the self-same beat of Time's wide wings
Hyperion slid into the rustled air,
And Saturn gain'd with Thea that sad place
Where Cybele and the bruised Titans mourn'd.
It was a den where no insulting light
Could glimmer on their tears; where their own groans
They felt, but heard not, for the solid roar
Of thunderous waterfalls and torrents hoarse,
Pouring a constant bulk, uncertain where.
Crag jutting forth to crag, and rocks that seem'd
Ever as if just rising from a sleep,
Forehead to forehead held their monstrous horns;
And thus in thousand hugest phantasies
Made a fit roofing to this nest of woe.
Instead of thrones, hard flint they sat upon,
Couches of rugged stone, and slaty ridge
Stubborn'd with iron. All were not assembled:
Some chain'd in torture, and some wandering.
Cœus, and Gyges, and Briareüs,
Typhon, and Dolor, and Porphyrion,
With many more, the brawniest in assault,
Were pent in regions of laborious breath;
Dungeon'd in opaque element, to keep
Their clenched teeth still clench'd, and all their limbs
Lock'd up like veins of metal, crampt and screw'd;
Without a motion, save of their big hearts
Heaving in pain, and horribly convulsed
With sanguine, feverous, boiling gurge of pulse.
Mnemosyne was straying in the world;
Far from her moon had Phœbe wander'd;
And many else were free to roam abroad,
But for the main, here found they covert drear.
Scarce images of life, one here, one there,
Lay vast and edgeways; like a dismal cirque
Of Druid stones, upon a forlorn moor,
When the chill rain begins at shut of eve,
In dull November, and their chancel vault,
The Heaven itself, is blinded throughout night.
Each one kept shroud, nor to his neighbour gave
Or word, or look, or action of despair.
Creüs was one; his ponderous iron mace
Lay by him, and a shatter'd rib of rock
Told of his rage, ere he thus sank and pined.
Iapetus another; in his grasp,
A serpent's plashy neck; its barbed tongue
Squeezed from the gorge, and all its uncurl'd length
Dead; and because the creature could not spit
Its poison in the eyes of conquering Jove.
Next Cottus: prone he lay, chin uppermost,
As though in pain; for still upon the flint
He ground severe his skull, with open mouth
And eyes at horrid working. Nearest him
Asia, born of most enormous Caf,
Who cost her mother Tellus keener pangs,
Though feminine, than any of her sons:
More thought than woe was in her dusky face,
For she was prophesying of her glory;
And in her wide imagination stood
Palm-shaded temples, and high rival fanes,
By Oxus or in Ganges' sacred isles.
Even as Hope upon her anchor leans,
So leant she, not so fair, upon a tusk
Shed from the broadest of her elephants.
Above her, on a crag's uneasy shelve,
Upon his elbow raised, all prostrate else,
Shadow'd Enceladus; once tame and mild
As grazing ox unworried in the meads;
Now tiger-passion'd, lion-thoughted, wroth,
He meditated, plotted, and even now
Was hurling mountains in that second war,
Not long delay'd, that seared the younger Gods
To hide themselves in forms of beast and bird.
Not far hence Atlas; and beside him prone
Phorcus, the sire of Gorgons. Neighbour'd close
Oceanus, and Tethys, in whose lap
Sobb'd Clymene among her tangled hair.
In midst of all lay Themis, at the feet
Of Ops the queen all clouded round from sight;
No shape distinguishable, more than when
Thick night confounds the pine-tops with the clouds:
And many else whose names may not be told.
For when the Muse's wings are air-ward spread,
Who shall delay her flight? And she must chaunt
Of Saturn, and his guide, who now had climb'd
With damp and slippery footing from a depth
More horrid still. Above a sombre cliff
Their heads appear'd, and up their stature grew
Till on the level height their steps found ease:
Then Thea spread abroad her trembling arms
Upon the precincts of this nest of pain,
And sidelong fix'd her eye on Saturn's face:
There saw she direst strife; the supreme God
At war with all the frailty of grief,
Of rage, of fear, anxiety, revenge,
Remorse, spleen, hope, but most of all despair.
Against these plagues he strove in vain; for Fate
Had pour'd a mortal oil upon his head,
A disanointing poison: so that Thea,
Affrighted, kept her still, and let him pass
First onwards in, among the fallen tribe.

As with us mortal men, the laden heart
Is persecuted more, and fever'd more,
When it is nighing to the mournful house
Where other hearts are sick of the same bruise;
So Saturn, as he walk'd into the midst,
Felt faint, and would have sunk among the rest,
But that he met Enceladus's eye,
Whose mightiness, and awe of him, at once
Came like an inspiration; and he shouted,
"Titans, behold your God!" at which some groan'd;
Some started on their feet; some also shouted;
Some wept, some wail'd—all bow'd with reverence;
And Ops, uplifting her black folded veil,
Show'd her pale cheeks, and all her forehead wan,
Her eye-brows thin and jet, and hollow eyes.
There is a roaring in the bleak-grown pines
When Winter lifts his voice; there is a noise
Among immortals when a God gives sign,
With hushing finger, how he means to load
His tongue with the full weight of utterless thought,
With thunder, and with music, and with pomp:
Such noise is like the roar of bleak-grown pines;
Which, when it ceases in this mountain'd world,
No other sound succeeds; but ceasing here,
Among these fallen, Saturn's voice therefrom
Grew up like organ, that begins anew
Its strain, when other harmonies, stopt short,
Leave the dinn'd air vibrating silverly.
Thus grew it up—"Not in my own sad breast,
Which is its own great judge and searcher out,
Can I find reason why ye should be thus:
Not in the legends of the first of days,
Studied from that old spirit-leaved book
Which starry Uranus with finger bright
Saved from the shores of darkness, when the waves
Low-ebb'd still hid it up in shallow gloom;—
And the which book ye know I ever kept
For my firm-based footstool:—Ah, infirm!
Not there, nor in sign, symbol, or portent
Of element, earth, water, air, and fire,—
At war, at peace, or inter-quarrelling
One against one, or two, or three, or all
Each several one against the other three,
As fire with air loud warring when rain-floods
Drown both, and press them both against earth's face,
Where, finding sulphur, a quadruple wrath
Unhinges the poor world;—not in that strife,
Wherefrom I take strange lore, and read it deep,
Can I find reason why ye should be thus:
No, no-where can unriddle, though I search,
And pore on Nature's universal scroll
Even to swooning, why ye, Divinities,
The first-born of all shaped and palpable Gods,
Should cower beneath what, in comparison,
Is untremendous might. Yet ye are here,
O'erwhelm'd, and spurn'd, and batter'd, ye are here!
O Titans, shall I say 'Arise!'—Ye groan:
Shall I say 'Crouch!'—Ye groan. What can I then?
O Heaven wide! O unseen parent dear!
What can I? Tell me, all ye brethren Gods,
How we can war, how engine our great wrath!
O speak your counsel now, for Saturn's ear
Is all a-hunger'd. Thou, Oceanus,
Ponderest high and deep; and in thy face
I see, astonied, that severe content
Which comes of thought and musing: give us help!"

So ended Saturn; and the God of the Sea,
Sophist and sage, from no Athenian grove,
But cogitation in his watery shades,
Arose, with locks not oozy, and began,
In murmurs, which his first-endeavouring tongue
Caught infant-like from the far-foam'd sands.
"O ye, whom wrath consumes! who, passion-stung,
Writhe at defeat, and nurse your agonies!
Shut up your senses, stifle up your ears,
My voice is not a bellows unto ire.
Yet listen, ye who will, whilst I bring proof
How ye, perforce, must be content to stoop:
And in the proof much comfort will I give,
If ye will take that comfort in its truth.
We fall by course of Nature's law, not force
Of thunder, or of Jove. Great Saturn, thou
Hast sifted well the atom-universe;
But for this reason, that thou art the King,
And only blind from sheer supremacy,
One avenue was shaded from thine eyes,
Through which I wander'd to eternal truth.
And first, as thou wast not the first of powers,
So art thou not the last; it cannot be.
Thou art not the beginning nor the end.
From chaos and parental darkness came
Light, the first fruits of that intestine broil,
That sullen ferment, which for wondrous ends
Was ripening in itself. The ripe hour came,
And with it light, and light, engendering
Upon its own producer, forthwith touch'd
The whole enormous matter into life.
Upon that very hour, our parentage,
The Heavens and the Earth, were manifest:
Then thou first-born, and we the giant-race,
Found ourselves ruling new and beauteous realms.
Now comes the pain of truth, to whom 't is pain;
O folly! for to bear all naked truths,
And to envisage circumstance, all calm,
That is the top of sovereignty. Mark well!
As Heaven and Earth are fairer, fairer far
Than Chaos and blank Darkness, though once chiefs;
And as we show beyond that Heaven and Earth
In form and shape compact and beautiful,
In will, in action free, companionship,
And thousand other signs of purer life;
So on our heels a fresh perfection treads,
A power more strong in beauty, born of us
And fated to excel us, as we pass
In glory that old Darkness: nor are we
Thereby more conquer'd than by us the rule
Of shapeless Chaos. Say, doth the dull soil
Quarrel with the proud forests it hath fed,
And feedeth still, more comely than itself?
Can it deny the chiefdom of green groves?
Or shall the tree be envious of the dove
Because it cooeth, and hath snowy wings
To wander wherewithal and find its joys?
We are such forest-trees, and our fair boughs
Have bred forth, not pale solitary doves,
But eagles golden-feather'd, who do tower
Above us in their beauty, and must reign
In right thereof; for 't is the eternal law
That first in beauty should be first in might:
Yea, by that law, another race may drive
Our conquerors to mourn as we do now.
Have ye beheld the young God of the Seas,

My dispossessor? Have ye seen his face?
Have ye beheld his chariot, foam'd along
By noble winged creatures he hath made?
I saw him on the calmed waters scud,
With such a glow of beauty in his eyes,
That it enforced me to bid sad farewell
To all my empire: farewell sad I took,
And hither came, to see how dolorous fate
Had wrought upon ye; and how I might best
Give consolation in this woe extreme.
Receive the truth, and let it be your balm.»

Whether through pozed conviction, or disdain,
They guarded silence, when Oceanus
Left murmuring, what deepest thought can tell?
But so it was, none answer'd for a space,
Save one whom none regarded, Clymene:
And yet she answer'd not, only complain'd,
With hectic lips, and eyes up-looking mild,
Thus wording timidly among the fierce:
« O Father! I am here the simplest voice,
And all my knowledge is that joy is gone,
And this thing woe crept in among our hearts,
There to remain for ever, as I fear:
I would not bode of evil, if I thought
So weak a creature could turn off the help
Which by just right should come of mighty Gods;
Yet let me tell my sorrow, let me tell
Of what I heard, and how it made me weep,
And know that we had parted from all hope.
I stood upon a shore, a pleasant shore,
Where a sweet clime was breathed from a land
Of fragrance, quietness, and trees, and flowers.
Full of calm joy it was, as I of grief;
Too full of joy and soft delicious warmth;
So that I felt a movement in my heart
To chide, and to reproach that solitude
With songs of misery, music of our woes;
And sat me down, and took a mouthed shell
And murmur'd into it, and made melody—
O melody no more! for while I sang,
And with poor skill let pass into the breeze
The dull shell's echo, from a bowery strand
Just opposite, an island of the sea,
There came enchantment with the shifting wind,
That did both drown and keep alive my ears.
I threw my shell away upon the sand,
And a wave fill'd it, as my sense was fill'd
With that new blissful golden melody.
A living death was in each gush of sounds,
Each family of rapturous hurried notes,
That fell, one after one, yet all at once,
Like pearl beads dropping sudden from their string:
And then another, then another strain,
Each like a dove leaving its olive perch,
With music wing'd instead of silent plumes,
To hover round my head, and make me sick
Of joy and grief at once. Grief overcame,
And I was stopping up my frantic ears,
When, past all hindrance of my trembling hands,
A voice came sweeter, sweeter than all tune,
And still it cried, 'Apollo! young Apollo!
The morning-bright Apollo! young Apollo!'
I fled, it follow'd me, and cried 'Apollo!'
O Father, and O Brethren! had ye felt
Those pains of mine! O Saturn, hadst thou felt,
Ye would not call this too indulged tongue
Presumptuous, in thus venturing to be heard!»

So far her voice flow'd on, like timorous brook
That, lingering along a pebbled coast,
Doth fear to meet the sea: but sea it met,
And shudder'd; for the overwhelming voice
Of huge Enceladus swallow'd it in wrath:
The ponderous syllables, like sullen waves
In the half-glutted hollows of reef-rocks,
Came booming thus, while still upon his arm
He lean'd; not rising, from supreme contempt.
« Or shall we listen to the over-wise,
Or to the over-foolish giant, Gods?
Not thunderbolt on thunderbolt, till all
That rebel Jove's whole armoury were spent,
Not world on world upon these shoulders piled,
Could agonize me more than baby-words
In midst of this dethronement horrible.
Speak! roar! shout! yell! ye sleepy Titans all.
Do ye forget the blows, the buffets vile?
Are ye not smitten by a youngling arm?
Dost thou forget, sham Monarch of the Waves,
Thy scalding in the seas? What! have I roused
Your spleens with so few simple words as these?
O joy! for now I see ye are not lost:
O joy! for now I see a thousand eyes
Wide glaring for revenge!»—As this he said,
He lifted up his stature vast, and stood,
Still without intermission speaking thus:
« Now ye are flames, I 'll tell you how to burn,
And purge the ether of our enemies;
How to feed fierce the crooked stings of fire,
And singe away the swollen clouds of Jove,
Stifling that puny essence in its tent.
O let him feel the evil he hath done;
For though I scorn Oceanus's lore,
Much pain have I for more than loss of realms:
The days of peace and slumberous calm are fled;
Those days, all innocent of scathing war,
When all the fair Existences of heaven
Came open-eyed to guess what we would speak:—
That was before our brows were taught to frown,
Before our lips knew else but solemn sounds;
That was before we knew the winged thing,
Victory, might be lost, or might be won.
And be ye mindful that Hyperion,
Our brightest brother, still is undisgraced—
Hyperion, lo! his radiance is here!

All eyes were on Enceladus's face,
And they beheld, while still Hyperion's name
Flew from his lips up to the vaulted rocks,
A pallid gleam across his features stern:
Not savage, for he saw full many a God
Wroth as himself. He look'd upon them all,
And in each face he saw a gleam of light,
But splendider in Saturn's, whose hoar locks
Shone like the bubbling foam about a keel
When the prow sweeps into a midnight cove.
In pale and silver silence they remain'd,
Till suddenly a splendour, like the morn,
Pervaded all the beetling gloomy steeps,
All the sad spaces of oblivion,
And every gulf, and every chasm old,

And every height, and every sullen depth,
Voiceless, or hoarse with loud tormented streams:
And all the everlasting cataraets,
And all the headlong torrents far and near,
Mantled before in darkness and huge shade,
Now saw the light and made it terrible.
It was Hyperion:—a granite peak
His bright feet touch'd, and there he stay'd to view
The misery his brilliance had betray'd
To the most hateful seeing of itself.
Golden his hair of short Numidian curl,
Regal his shape majestic, a vast shade
In midst of his own brightness, like the bulk
Of Memnon's image at the set of sun
To one who travels from the dusking East:
Sighs, too, as mournful as that Memnon's harp,
He utter'd, while his hands, contemplative,
He press'd together, and in silence stood.
Despondence seized again the fallen Gods
At sight of the dejected King of Day,
And many hid their faces from the light:
But fierce Enceladus sent forth his eyes
Among the brotherhood; and, at their glare,
Uprose Iäpetus, and Creüs too,
And Phoreus, sea-born, and together strode
To where he towered on his eminence.
There those four shouted forth old Saturn's name;
Hyperion from the peak loud answered, « Saturn! »
Saturn sat near the Mother of the Gods,
In whose face was no joy, though all the Gods
Gave from their hollow throats the name of « Saturn! »

BOOK III.

Thus in alternate uproar and sad peace,
Amazed were those Titans utterly.
O leave them, Muse! O leave them to their woes!
For thou art weak to sing such tumults dire:
A solitary sorrow best befits
Thy lips, and antheming a lonely grief.
Leave them, O Muse! for thou anon wilt find
Many a fallen old Divinity
Wandering in vain about bewilder'd shores.
Meantime touch piously the Delphic harp,
And not a wind of heaven but will breathe
In aid soft warble from the Dorian flute;
For lo! 't is for the Father of all verse.
Flush every thing that hath a vermeil hue,
Let the rose glow intense and warm the air,
And let the clouds of even and of morn
Float in voluptuous fleeces o'er the hills;
Let the red wine within the goblet boil,
Cold as a bubbling well; let faint-lipp'd shells,
On sands, or in great deeps, vermilion turn
Through all their labyrinths; and let the maid
Blush keenly, as with some warm kiss surprised.
Chief isle of the embowered Cyclades,
Rejoice, O Delos, with thine olives green,
And poplars, and lawn-shading palms, and beech,
In which the Zephyr breathes the loudest song,
And hazels thick, dark-stemm'd beneath the shade:
Apollo is once more the golden theme!
Where was he, when the Giant of the Sun
Stood bright, amid the sorrow of his peers?
Together had he left his mother fair
And his twin-sister sleeping in their bower,
And in the morning twilight wander'd forth
Beside the osiers of a rivulet,
Full ankle-deep in lilies of the vale.
The nightingale had ceased, and a few stars
Were lingering in the heavens, while the thrush
Began calm-throated. Throughout all the isle
There was no covert, no retired cave
Unhaunted by the murmurous noise of waves,
Though scarcely heard in many a green recess.
He listen'd, and he wept, and his bright tears
Went trickling down the golden bow he held.
Thus with half-shut suffused eyes he stood,
While from beneath some cumbrous boughs hard by
With solemn step an awful Goddess came,
And there was purport in her looks for him,
Which he with eager guess began to read
Perplex'd, the while melodiously he said:
« How camest thou over the unfooted sea?
Or hath that antique mien and robed form
Moved in these vales invisible till now?
Sure I have heard those vestments sweeping o'er
The fallen leaves, when I have sat alone
In cool 'mid forest. Surely I have traced
The rustle of those ample skirts about
These grassy solitudes, and seen the flowers
Lift up their heads, as still the whisper pass'd.
Goddess! I have beheld those eyes before,
And their eternal calm, and all that face,
Or I have dream'd. »—« Yes, » said the supreme shape,
« Thou hast dream'd of me; and awaking up
Didst find a lyre all golden by thy side,
Whose strings touch'd by thy fingers, all the vast
Unwearied ear of the whole universe
Listen'd in pain and pleasure at the birth
Of such new tuneful wonder. Is 't not strange
That thou shouldst weep, so gifted? Tell me, youth,
What sorrow thou canst feel; for I am sad
When thou dost shed a tear: explain thy griefs
To one who in this lonely isle hath been
The watcher of thy sleep and hours of life,
From the young day when first thy infant hand
Pluck'd witless the weak flowers, till thine arm
Could bend that bow heroic to all times.
Show thy heart's secret to an ancient Power
Who hath forsaken old and sacred thrones
For prophecies of thee, and for the sake
Of loveliness new-born. »—Apollo then,
With sudden scrutiny and gloomless eyes,
Thus answer'd, while his white melodious throat
Throbb'd with the syllables.—« Mnemosyne!
Thy name is on my tongue, I know not how;
Why should I tell thee what thou so well seest?
Why should I strive to show what from thy lips
Would come no mystery? For me, dark, dark,
And painful vile oblivion seals my eyes:
I strive to search wherefore I am so sad,
Until a melancholy numbs my limbs;
And then upon the grass I sit, and moan,
Like one who once had wings.—O why should I
Feel cursed and thwarted, when the liegeless air
Yields to my step aspirant? why should I
Spurn the green turf as hateful to my feet?
Goddess benign! point forth some unknown thing:
Are there not other regions than this isle?

What are the stars? There is the sun, the sun!
And the most patient brilliance of the moon!
And stars by thousands! Point me out the way
To any one particular beauteous star,
And I will flit into it with my lyre,
And make its silvery splendour pant with bliss.
I have heard the cloudy thunder: Where is power?
Whose hand, whose essence, what divinity
Makes this alarm in the elements,
While I here idle listen on the shores
In fearless yet in aching ignorance?
O tell me, lonely Goddess! by thy harp,
That waileth every morn and eventide,
Tell me why thus I rave, about these groves!
Mute thou remainest—Mute? yet I can read
A wondrous lesson in thy silent face:
Knowledge enormous makes a God of me.
Names, deeds, grey legends, dire events, rebellions,
Majesties, sovran voices, agonies,
Creations and destroyings, all at once
Pour into the wide hollows of my brain,
And deify me, as if some blithe wine
Or bright elixir peerless I had drunk,
And so become immortal.»—Thus the God,
While his enkindled eyes, with level glance
Beneath his white soft temples, stedfast kept
Trembling with light upon Mnemosyne.
Soon wild commotions shook him, and made flush
All the immortal fairness of his limbs:
Most like the struggle at the gate of death;
Or liker still to one who should take leave
Of pale immortal death, and with a pang
As hot as death's is chill, with fierce convulse
Die into life: so young Apollo anguish'd;
His very hair, his golden tresses famed
Kept undulation round his eager neck.
During the pain Mnemosyne upheld
Her arms as one who prophesied.—At length
Apollo shriek'd;—and lo! from all his limbs
Celestial * * * * * *
* * * * * * * *

Miscellaneous Poems.

What more felicity can fall to creature
Than to enjoy delight with liberty?
Fate of the Butterfly.—SPENSER.

DEDICATION.

TO LEIGH HUNT, ESQ.

GLORY and Loveliness have pass'd away;
For if we wander out in early morn,
No wreathed incense do we see upborne
Into the east to meet the smiling day:
No crowd of nymphs soft-voiced and young and gay,
In woven baskets bringing ears of corn,
Roses, and pinks, and violets, to adorn
The shrine of Flora in her early May.
But there are left delights as high as these.
And I shall ever bless my destiny,
That in a time when under pleasant trees
Pan is no longer sought, I feel a free,
A leafy luxury, seeing I could please
With these poor offerings, a man like thee.

Places of nestling green for poets made.
Story of Rimini.

I STOOD tip-toe upon a little hill,
The air was cooling, and so very still,
That the sweet buds which with a modest pride
Pull droopingly, in slanting curve aside,
Their scanty-leaved, and finely-tapering stems,
Had not yet lost their starry diadems
Caught from the early sobbing of the morn.
The clouds were pure and white as flocks new-shorn,
And fresh from the clear brook; sweetly they slept
On the blue fields of heaven, and then there crept
A little noiseless noise among the leaves,
Born of the very sigh that silence heaves;
For not the faintest motion could be seen
Of all the shades that slanted o'er the green.
There was wide wandering for the greediest eye,
To peer about upon variety;
Far round the horizon's crystal air to skim,
And trace the dwindled edgings of its brim;
To picture out the quaint and curious bending
Of a fresh woodland alley never-ending:
Or by the bowery clefts, and leafy shelves,
Guess where the jaunty streams refresh themselves.
I gazed awhile, and felt as light, and free
As though the fanning wings of Mercury
Had play'd upon my heels: I was light-hearted,
And many pleasures to my vision started;
So I straightway began to pluck a posy
Of luxuries bright, milky, soft and rosy.

A bush of May-flowers with the bees about them;
Ah, sure no tasteful nook could be without them;
And let a lush laburnum oversweep them,
And let long grass grow round the roots, to keep them
Moist, cool and green; and shade the violets,
That they may bind the moss in leafy nets.

A filbert-hedge with wild-briar overtwined,
And clumps of woodbine taking the soft wind
Upon their summer thrones; there too should be
The frequent-chequer of a youngling tree,
That with a score of light green brethren shoots
From the quaint mossiness of aged roots:
Round which is heard a spring-head of clear waters,
Babbling so wildly of its lovely daughters,

The spreading blue-bells: it may haply mourn
That such fair clusters should be rudely torn
From their fresh beds, and scatter'd thoughtlessly
By infant hands, left on the path to die.

Open afresh your round of starry folds,
Ye ardent marigolds!
Dry up the moisture from your golden lids,
For great Apollo bids
That in these days your praises should be sung
On many harps, which he has lately strung;
And when again your dewiness he kisses,
Tell him, I have you in my world of blisses:
So haply when I rove in some far vale,
His mighty voice may come upon the gale.

Here are sweet peas, on tip-toe for a flight:
With wings of gentle flush o'er delicate white,
And taper fingers catching at all things,
To bind them all about with tiny rings.
Linger awhile upon some bending planks
That lean against a streamlet's rushy banks,
And watch intently Nature's gentle doings:
They will be found softer than ring-dove's cooings.
How silent comes the water round that bend;
Not the minutest whisper does it send
To the o'erhanging sallows: blades of grass
Slowly across the chequer'd shadows pass.
Why you might read two sonnets, ere they reach
To where the hurrying freshnesses aye preach
A natural sermon o'er their pebbly beds;
Where swarms of minnows show their little heads,
Staying their wavy bodies 'gainst the streams,
To taste the luxury of sunny beams
Temper'd with coolness. How they ever wrestle
With their own sweet delight, and ever nestle
Their silver bellies on the pebbly sand!
If you but scantily hold out the hand,
That very instant not one will remain;
But turn your eye, and they are there again.
The ripples seem right glad to reach those cresses,
And cool themselves among the emerald tresses;
The while they cool themselves, they freshness give,
And moisture, that the bowery green may live:
So keeping up an interchange of favours,
Like good men in the truth of their behaviours.
Sometimes goldfinches one by one will drop
From low hung branches: little space they stop;
But sip, and twitter, and their feathers sleek;
Then off at once, as in a wanton freak:
Or perhaps, to show their black, and golden wings,
Pausing upon their yellow flutterings.
Were I in such a place, I sure should pray
That nought less sweet, might call my thoughts away,
Than the soft rustle of a maiden's gown
Fanning away the dandelion's down;
Than the light music of her nimble toes
Patting against the sorrel as she goes.
How she would start, and blush, thus to be caught
Playing in all her innocence of thought!
O let me lead her gently o'er the brook,
Watch her half-smiling lips and downward look;
O let me for one moment touch her wrist;
Let me one moment to her breathing list;
And as she leaves me may she often turn
Her fair eyes looking through her locks auburne.

What next? A tuft of evening primroses,
O'er which the mind may hover till it doses;
O'er which it well might take a pleasant sleep,
But that 't is ever startled by the leap
Of buds into ripe flowers; or by the flitting
Of diverse moths, that aye their rest are quitting;
Or by the moon lifting her silver rim
Above a cloud, and with a gradual swim
Coming into the blue with all her light.
O Maker of sweet poets! dear delight
Of this fair world and all its gentle livers;
Spangler of clouds, halo of crystal rivers,
Mingler with leaves, and dew and tumbling streams,
Closer of lovely eyes to lovely dreams,
Lover of loneliness, and wandering,
Of upcast eye, and tender pondering!
Thee must I praise above all other glories
That smile us on to tell delightful stories.
For what has made the sage or poet write
But the fair paradise of Nature's light?
In the calm grandeur of a sober line,
We see the waving of the mountain pine;
And when a tale is beautifully staid,
We feel the safety of a hawthorn glade:
When it is moving on luxurious wings,
The soul is lost in pleasant smotherings:
Fair dewy roses brush against our faces,
And flowering laurels spring from diamond vases;
O'er head we see the jasmine and sweet-briar,
And bloomy grapes laughing from green attire;
While at our feet, the voice of crystal bubbles
Charms us at once away from all our troubles:
So that we feel uplifted from the world,
Walking upon the white clouds wreath'd and curl'd.
So felt he, who first told how Psyche went
On the smooth wind to realms of wonderment;
What Psyche felt, and Love, when their full lips
First touch'd; what amorous and fondling nips
They gave each others' cheeks; with all their sighs,
And how they kist each other's tremulous eyes:
The silver lamp,—the ravishment—the wonder—
The darkness—loneliness,—the fearful thunder;
Their woes gone by, and both to heaven up flown,
To bow for gratitude before Jove's throne.
So did he feel, who pull'd the boughs aside,
That we might look into a forest wide,
To catch a glimpse of Fawns, and Dryades
Coming with softest rustle through the trees;
And garlands woven of flowers wild, and sweet,
Upheld on ivory wrists, or sporting feet:
Telling us how fair trembling Syrinx fled
Arcadian Pan, with such a fearful dread.
Poor nymph,—poor Pan,—how he did weep to find,
Nought but a lovely sighing of the wind
Along the reedy stream; a half-heard strain,
Full of sweet desolation—balmy pain.

What first inspired a bard of old to sing
Narcissus pining o'er the untainted spring?
In some delicious ramble, he had found
A little space, with boughs all woven round;
And in the midst of all, a clearer pool
Than e'er reflected in its pleasant cool
The blue sky, here and there serenely peeping,
Through tendril wreaths fantastically creeping.

And on the bank a lonely flower he spied,
A meek and forlorn flower, with nought of pride,
Drooping its beauty o'er the watery clearness,
To woo its own sad image into nearness:
Deaf to light Zephyrus it would not move;
But still would seem to droop, to pine, to love.
So while the poet stood in this sweet spot,
Some fainter gleamings o'er his fancy shot;
Nor was it long ere he had told the tale
Of young Narcissus, and sad Echo's bale.

Where had he been, from whose warm head out flew
That sweetest of all songs, that ever new,
That aye refreshing, pure deliciousness,
Coming ever to bless
The wanderer by moonlight? to him bringing
Shapes from the invisible world, unearthly singing
From out the middle air, from flowery nests,
And from the pillowy silkiness that rests
Full in the speculation of the stars.
Ah! surely he had burst our mortal bars;
Into some wondrous region he had gone,
To search for thee, divine Endymion!

He was a Poet, sure a lover too,
Who stood on Latmus' top, what time there blew
Soft breezes from the myrtle vale below;
And brought, in faintness solemn, sweet, and slow,
A hymn from Dian's temple; while upswelling,
The incense went to her own starry dwelling.
But though her face was clear as infant's eyes,
Though she stood smiling o'er the sacrifice,
The poet wept at her so piteous fate,
Wept that such beauty should be desolate:
So in fine wrath some golden sounds he won,
And gave meek Cynthia her Endymion.

Queen of the wide air; thou most lovely queen
Of all the brightness that mine eyes have seen!
As thou exceedest all things in thy shine,
So every tale, does this sweet tale of thine.
O for three words of honey, that I might
Tell but one wonder of thy bridal night!

Where distant ships do seem to show their keels,
Phœbus awhile delay'd his mighty wheels,
And turn'd to smile upon thy bashful eyes,
Ere he his unseen pomp would solemnize.
The evening weather was so bright, and clear,
That men of health were of unusual cheer;
Stepping like Homer at the trumpet's call,
Or young Apollo on the pedestal:
And lovely women were as fair and warm,
As Venus looking sideways in alarm.
The breezes were ethereal, and pure,
And crept through half-closed lattices to cure
The languid sick; it cool'd their fever'd sleep,
And soothed them into slumbers full and deep.
Soon they awoke clear-eyed: nor burnt with thirsting,
Nor with hot fingers, nor with temples bursting:
And springing up, they met the wond'ring sight
Of their dear friends, nigh foolish with delight;
Who feel their arms, and breasts, and kiss, and stare,
And on their placid foreheads part the hair.
Young men and maidens at each other gazed,
With hands held back, and motionless, amazed
To see the brightness in each other's eyes;
And so they stood, fill'd with a sweet surprise,
Until their tongues were loosed in poesy.
Therefore no lover did of anguish die:
But the soft numbers, in that moment spoken,
Made silken ties, that never may be broken.
Cynthia! I cannot tell the greater blisses
That follow'd thine, and thy dear shepherd's kisses:
Was there a poet born?—But now no more—
My wand'ring spirit must no further soar.

SPECIMEN OF AN INDUCTION TO A POEM.

Lo! I must tell a tale of chivalry;
For large white plumes are dancing in mine eye.
Not like the formal crest of latter days:
But bending in a thousand graceful ways;
So graceful, that it seems no mortal hand,
Or e'en the touch of Archimago's wand,
Could charm them into such an attitude.
We must think rather, that in playful mood,
Some mountain breeze had turn'd its chief delight
To show this wonder of its gentle might.
Lo! I must tell a tale of chivalry;
For while I muse, the lance points slantingly
Athwart the morning air: some lady sweet,
Who cannot feel for cold her tender feet,
From the worn top of some old battlement
Hails it with tears, her stout defender sent;
And from her own pure self no joy dissembling,
Wraps round her ample robe with happy trembling.
Sometimes when the good knight his rest could take,
It is reflected, clearly, in a lake,
With the young ashen boughs, 'gainst which it rests,
And th' half seen mossiness of linnets' nests.
Ah! shall I ever tell its cruelty,
When the fire flashes from a warrior's eye,
And his tremendous hand is grasping it,
And his dark brow for very wrath is knit?
Or when his spirit, with more calm intent,
Leaps to the honours of a tournament,
And makes the gazers round about the ring
Stare at the grandeur of the balancing?
No, no! this is far off:—then how shall I
Revive the dying tones of minstrelsy,
Which linger yet about long gothic arches,
In dark green ivy, and among wild larches?
How sing the splendour of the revelries,
When butts of wine are drank off to the lees?
And that bright lance, against the fretted wall,
Beneath the shade of stately banneral,
Is slung with shining cuirass, sword, and shield?
Where ye may see a spur in bloody field,
Light-footed damsels move with gentle paces
Round the wide hall, and show their happy faces;
Or stand in courtly talk by fives and sevens:
Like those fair stars that twinkle in the heavens.
Yet must I tell a tale of chivalry:
Or wherefore comes that knight so proudly by?
Wherefore more proudly does the gentle knight
Rein in the swelling of his ample might?
Spenser! thy brows are arched, open, kind,
And come like a clear sun-rise to my mind;
And always does my heart with pleasure dance,
When I think on thy noble countenance:

Where never yet was aught more earthly seen
Than the pure freshness of thy laurels green.
Therefore, great bard, I not so fearfully
Call on thy gentle spirit to hover nigh
My daring steps: or if thy tender care,
Thus startled unaware,
Be jealous that the foot of other wight
Should madly follow that bright path of light
Traced by thy loved Libertas; he will speak,
And tell thee that my prayer is very meek;
That I will follow with due reverence,
And start with awe at mine own strange pretence.
Him thou wilt hear; so I will rest in hope
To see wide plains, fair trees, and lawny slope:
The morn, the eve, the light, the shade, the flowers;
Clear streams, smooth lakes, and overlooking towers.

CALIDORE.

A FRAGMENT.

Young Calidore is paddling o'er the lake;
His healthful spirit eager and awake
To feel the beauty of a silent eve,
Which seem'd full loath this happy world to leave,
The light dwelt o'er the scene so lingeringly.
He bares his forehead to the cool blue sky,
And smiles at the far clearness all around,
Until his heart is well nigh over wound,
And turns for calmness to the pleasant green
Of easy slopes, and shadowy trees that lean
So elegantly o'er the waters' brim
And show their blossoms trim.
Scarce can his clear and nimble eye-sight follow
The freaks, and dartings of the black-wing'd swallow,
Delighting much, to see it half at rest,
Dip so refreshingly its wings and breast
'Gainst the smooth surface, and to mark anon,
The widening circles into nothing gone.

And now the sharp keel of his little boat
Comes up with ripple, and with easy float,
And glides into a bed of water lilies:
Broad-leaved are they, and their white canopies
Are upward turn'd to catch the heavens' dew.
Near to a little island's point they grew;
Whence Calidore might have the goodliest view
Of this sweet spot of earth. The bowery shore
Went off in gentle windings to the hoar
And light blue mountains: but no breathing man
With a warm heart, and eye prepared to scan
Nature's clear beauty, could pass lightly by
Objects that look'd out so invitingly
On either side. These, gentle Calidore
Greeted, as he had known them long before.

The sidelong view of swelling leafiness,
Which the glad setting sun in gold doth dress,
Whence, ever and anon, the joy outsprings,
And scales upon the beauty of its wings.

The lonely turret, shatter'd, and outworn,
Stands venerably proud; too proud to mourn
Its long-lost grandeur: fir-trees grow around,
Aye dropping their hard fruit upon the ground.

The little chapel, with the cross above
Upholding wreaths of ivy; the white dove,
That on the windows spreads his feathers light,
And seems from purple clouds to wing its flight.

Green-tufted islands casting their soft shades
Across the lake; sequester'd leafy glades,
That through the dimness of their twilight show
Large dock-leaves, spiral foxgloves, or the glow
Of the wild cat's-eyes, or the silvery stems
Of delicate birch-trees, or long grass which hems
A little brook. The youth had long been viewing
These pleasant things, and heaven was bedewing
The mountain flowers, when his glad senses caught
A trumpet's silver voice. Ah! it was fraught
With many joys for him: the warder's ken
Had found white coursers prancing in the glen:
Friends very dear to him he soon will see;
So pushes off his boat most eagerly.
And soon upon the lake he skims along,
Deaf to the nightingale's first under-song;
Nor minds he the white swans that dream so sweetly:
His spirit flies before him so completely.
And now he turns a jutting point of land,
Whence may be seen the castle gloomy and grand:
Nor will a bee buzz round two swelling peaches,
Before the point of his light shallop reaches
Those marble steps that through the water dip:
Now over them he goes with hasty trip,
And scarcely stays to ope the folding-doors:
Anon he leaps along the oaken floors
Of halls and corridors.

Delicious sounds! those little bright-eyed things
That float about the air on azure wings,
Had been less heartfelt by him than the clang
Of clattering hoofs; into the court he sprang,
Just as two noble steeds, and palfreys twain,
Were slanting out their necks with loosen'd rein;
While from beneath the threatening portcullis
They brought their happy burthens. What a kiss,
What gentle squeeze he gave each lady's hand!
How tremblingly their delicate ancles spann'd!
Into how sweet a trance his soul was gone,
While whisperings of affection
Made him delay to let their tender feet
Come to the earth; with an incline so sweet
From their low palfreys o'er his neck they bent:
And whether there were tears of languishment,
Or that the evening dew had pearl'd their tresses,
He feels a moisture on his cheek, and blesses
With lips that tremble, and with glistening eye,
All the soft luxury
That nestled in his arms. A dimpled hand,
Fair as some wonder out of fairy land,
Hung from his shoulder like the drooping flowers
Of whitest Cassia, fresh from summer showers:
And this he fondled with his happy cheek,
As if for joy he would no further seek:
When the kind voice of good Sir Clerimond
Came to his ear, like something from beyond
His present being: so he gently drew
His warm arms, thrilling now with pulses new,
From their sweet thrall, and forward gently bending,
Thank'd Heaven that his joy was never-ending;

While 'gainst his forehead he devoutly press'd
A hand Heaven made to succour the distress'd;
A hand that from the world's bleak promontory
Had lifted Calidore for deeds of Glory.

Amid the pages, and the torches' glare,
There stood a knight, patting the flowing hair
Of his proud horse's mane: he was withal
A man of elegance, and stature tall:
So that the waving of his plumes would be
High as the berries of a wild ash tree,
Or as the winged cap of Mercury.
His armour was so dexterously wrought
In shape, that sure no living man had thought
It hard, and heavy steel: but that indeed
It was some glorious form, some splendid weed,
In which a spirit new come from the skies
Might live, and show itself to human eyes.
'T is the far-famed, the brave Sir Gondibert,
Said the good man to Calidore alert;
While the young warrior with a step of grace
Came up,—a courtly smile upon his face,
And mailed hand held out, ready to greet
The large-eyed wonder, and ambitious heat
Of the aspiring boy; who as he led
Those smiling ladies, often turn'd his head
To admire the visor arch'd so gracefully
Over a knightly brow; while they went by
The lamps that from the high-roof'd hall were pendent,
And gave the steel a shining quite transcendent.

Soon in a pleasant chamber they are seated,
The sweet-lipp'd ladies have already greeted
All the green leaves that round the window chamber,
To show their purple stars, and bells of amber.
Sir Gondibert has doff'd his shining steel,
Gladdening in the free and airy feel
Of a light mantle; and while Clerimond
Is looking round about him with a fond
And placid eye, young Calidore is burning
To hear of knightly deeds, and gallant spurning
Of all unworthiness; and how the strong of arm
Kept off dismay, and terror, and alarm
From lovely woman: while brimful of this,
He gave each damsel's hand so warm a kiss,
And had such manly ardour in his eye,
That each at other look'd half-staringly:
And then their features started into smiles,
Sweet as blue heavens o'er enchanted isles.

Softly the breezes from the forest came,
Softly they blew aside the taper's flame;
Clear was the song from Philomel's far bower;
Grateful the incense from the lime-tree flower;
Mysterious, wild, the far-heard trumpet's tone;
Lovely the moon in ether, all alone:
Sweet too the converse of these happy mortals,
As that of busy spirits when the portals
Are closing in the West; or that soft humming
We hear around when Hesperus is coming.
Sweet be their sleep. * * * * * * *

TO SOME LADIES

ON RECEIVING A CURIOUS SHELL.

What though, while the wonders of nature exploring,
I cannot your light, mazy footsteps attend;
Nor listen to accents, that almost adoring,
Bless Cynthia's face, the enthusiast's friend:

Yet over the steep, whence the mountain-stream rushes,
With you, kindest friends, in idea I rove;
Mark the clear tumbling crystal, its passionate gushes,
Its spray, that the wild flower kindly bedews.

Why linger ye so, the wild labyrinth strolling?
Why breathless, unable your bliss to declare?
Ah! you list to the nightingale's tender condoling,
Responsive to sylphs, in the moon-beamy air.

'T is morn, and the flowers with dew are yet drooping,
I see you are treading the verge of the sea:
And now! ah, I see it—you just now are stooping
To pick up the keep-sake intended for me.

If a cherub, on pinions of silver descending,
Had brought me a gem from the fretwork of Heaven;
And smiles with his star-cheering voice sweetly blending,
The blessings of Tighe had melodiously given;

It had not created a warmer emotion
Than the present, fair nymphs, I was blest with from you;
Than the shell, from the bright golden sands of the ocean,
Which the emerald waves at your feet gladly threw.

For, indeed, 't is a sweet and peculiar pleasure
(And blissful is he who such happiness finds),
To possess but a span of the hour of leisure
In elegant, pure, and aerial minds.

ON RECEIVING A COPY OF VERSES FROM THE SAME LADIES.

Hast thou from the caves of Golconda, a gem
Pure as the ice-drop that froze on the mountain?
Bright as the humming-bird's green diadem,
When it flutters in sun-beams that shine through a fountain?

Hast thou a goblet for dark sparkling wine?
That goblet right heavy, and massy, and gold?
And splendidly mark'd with the story divine
Of Armida the fair, and Rinaldo the bold?

Hast thou a steed with a mane richly flowing?
Hast thou a sword that thine enemy's smart is?
Hast thou a trumpet rich melodies blowing?
And wear'st thou the shield of the famed Britomartis?

What is it that hangs from thy shoulder so brave,
Embroider'd with many a spring-peering flower?
Is it a scarf that thy fair lady gave?
And hastest thou now to that fair lady's bower?

Ah! courteous Sir Knight, with large joy thou art crown'd;
Full many the glories that brighten thy youth!
I will tell thee my blisses, which richly abound
In magical powers to bless and to sooth.

On this scroll thou seest written in characters fair
A sun-beaming tale of a wreath, and a chain:
And, warrior, it nurtures the property rare
Of charming my mind from the trammels of pain.

This canopy mark: 't is the work of a fay;
Beneath its rich shade did King Oberon languish,
When lovely Titania was far, far away,
And cruelly left him to sorrow and anguish.

There, oft would he bring from his soft-sighing lute
Wild strains to which, spell-bound, the nightingales listen'd!
The wondering spirits of Heaven were mute,
And tears 'mong the dew-drops of morning oft glisten'd.

In this little dome, all those melodies strange,
Soft, plaintive, and melting, for ever will sigh;
Nor e'er will the notes from their tenderness change,
Nor e'er will the music of Oberon die.

So when I am in a voluptuous vein,
I pillow my head on the sweets of the rose,
And list to the tale of the wreath, and the chain,
Till its echoes depart; then I sink to repose.

Adieu! valiant Eric! with joy thou art crown'd,
Full many the glories that brighten thy youth,
I too have my blisses, which richly abound
In magical powers to bless, and to soothe.

TO ———.

Hadst thou lived in days of old,
O what wonders had been told
Of thy lively countenance,
And thy humid eyes, that dance
In the midst of their own brightness,
In the very fane of lightness;
Over which thine eyebrows, leaning,
Picture out each lovely meaning:
In a dainty bend they lie,
Like to streaks across the sky,
Or the feathers from a crow,
Fallen on a bed of snow.
Of thy dark hair, that extends
Into many graceful bends:
As the leaves of hellebore
Turn to whence they sprung before.
And behind each ample curl
Peeps the richness of a pearl.
Downward too flows many a tress
With a glossy waviness,
Full, and round like globes that rise
From the censer to the skies
Through sunny air. Add too, the sweetness
Of thy honied voice; the neatness
Of thine ancle lightly turn'd:
With those beauties scarce discern'd,
Kept with such sweet privacy,
That they seldom meet the eye
Of the little Loves that fly
Round about with eager pry.
Saving when with freshening lave,
Thou dipp'st them in the taintless wave;
Like twin water-lilies, born
In the coolness of the morn.
O, if thou hadst breathed then,
Now the Muses had been ten.
Couldst thou wish for lineage higher
Than twin-sister of Thalia?
At least for ever, evermore
Will I call the Graces four.
Hadst thou lived when chivalry
Lifted up her lance on high,
Tell me what thou wouldst have been?
Ah! I see the silver sheen
Of thy broider'd-floating vest
Cov'ring half thine ivory breast:
Which, O Heavens! I should see,
But that cruel Destiny
Has placed a golden cuirass there,
Keeping secret what is fair.
Like sun-beams in a cloudlet nested,
Thy locks in knightly casque are rested:
O'er which bend four milky plumes,
Like the gentle lily's blooms
Springing from a costly vase.
See with what a stately pace
Comes thine alabaster steed;
Servant of heroic deed!
O'er his loins, his trappings glow
Like the northern lights on snow.
Mount his back! thy sword unsheath!
Sign of the enchanter's death;
Bane of every wicked spell;
Silencer of dragon's yell.
Alas! thou this wilt never do:
Thou art an enchantress too,
And will surely never spill
Blood of those whose eyes can kill.

TO HOPE.

When by my solitary hearth I sit,
And hateful thoughts enwrap my soul in gloom;
When no fair dreams before my «mind's eye» flit,
And the bare heath of life presents no bloom;
Sweet Hope! ethereal balm upon me shed,
And wave thy silver pinions o'er my head.

Whene'er I wander, at the fall of night,
Where woven boughs shut out the moon's bright ray,
Should sad Despondency my musings fright,
And frown, to drive fair Cheerfulness away,
Peep with the moon-beams through the leafy roof,
And keep that fiend Despondence far aloof.

Should Disappointment, parent of Despair,
Strive for her son to seize my careless heart
When, like a cloud, he sits upon the air,
Preparing on his spell-bound prey to dart:
Chase him away, sweet Hope, with visage bright,
And fright him, as the morning frightens night!

Whene'er the fate of those I hold most dear
Tells to my fearful breast a tale of sorrow,
O bright-eyed Hope, my morbid fancy cheer;
Let me awhile thy sweetest comforts borrow:
Thy heaven-born radiance around me shed,
And wave thy silver pinions o'er my head!

Should e'er unhappy love my bosom pain,
From cruel parents, or relentless fair,
O let me think it is not quite in vain
To sigh out sonnets to the midnight air!
Sweet Hope! ethereal balm upon me shed,
And wave thy silver pinions o'er my head.

In the long vista of the years to roll,
Let me not see our country's honour fade!
O let me see our land retain her soul!
Her pride, her freedom; and not freedom's shade.
From thy bright eyes unusual brightness shed—
Beneath thy pinions canopy my head!

Let me not see the patriot's high bequest,
Great Liberty! how great in plain attire!
With the base purple of a court oppress'd,
Bowing her head, and ready to expire:
But let me see thee stoop from Heaven on wings
That fill the skies with silver glitterings!

And as, in sparkling majesty, a star
Gilds the bright summit of some gloomy cloud;
Brightening the half-veil'd face of heaven afar:
So, when dark thoughts my boding spirit shroud,
Sweet Hope! celestial influence round me shed,
Waving thy silver pinions o'er my head.

February, 1815.

IMITATION OF SPENSER.

* * * * * * *

Now Morning from her orient chamber came,
And her first footsteps touch'd a verdant hill:
Crowning its lawny crest with amber flame,
Silvering the untainted gushes of its rill;
Which, pure from mossy beds, did down distil,
And, after parting beds of simple flowers,
By many streams a little lake did fill,
Which round its marge reflected woven bowers,
And, in its middle space, a sky that never lowers.

There the kingfisher saw his plumage bright,
Vyeing with fish of brilliant dye below;
Whose silken fins' and golden scales' light
Cast upward, through the waves, a ruby glow:
There saw the swan his neck of arched snow,
And oar'd himself along with majesty;
Sparkled his jetty eyes; his feet did show
Beneath the waves like Afric's ebony,
And on his back a fay reclined voluptuously.

Ah! could I tell the wonders of an isle
That in that fairest lake had placed been,
I could e'en Dido of her grief beguile;
Or rob from aged Lear his bitter teen:
For sure so fair a place was never seen
Of all that ever charm'd romantic eye:
It seem'd an emerald in the silver sheen
Of the bright waters; or as when on high,
Through clouds of fleecy white, laughs the cœrulean sky.

And all around it dipp'd luxuriously
Slopings of verdure through the glossy tide,
Which, as it were in gentle amity,
Rippled delighted up the flowery side;
As if to glean the ruddy tears it tried,
Which fell profusely from the rose-tree stem!
Haply it was the workings of its pride,
In strife to throw upon the shore a gem
Outvyeing all the buds in Flora's diadem.

* * * * *

Woman! when I behold thee flippant, vain,
Inconstant, childish, proud, and full of fancies;
Without that modest softening that enhances
The downcast eye, repentant of the pain
That its mild light creates to heal again;
E'en then, elate, my spirit leaps and prances,
E'en then my soul with exultation dances
For that to love, so long, I 've dormant lain:
But when I see thee meek, and kind, and tender,
Heavens! how desperately do I adore
Thy winning graces;—to be thy defender
I hotly burn—to be a Calidore—
A very Red Cross Knight—a stout Leander—
Might I be loved by thee like these of yore.

Light feet, dark violet eyes, and parted hair;
Soft dimpled hands, white neck, and creamy breast;
Are things on which the dazzled senses rest
Till the fond, fixed eyes, forget they stare.
From such fine pictures, Heavens! I cannot dare
To turn my admiration, though unpossess'd
They be of what is worthy,—though not drest,
In lovely modesty, and virtues rare.
Yet these I leave as thoughtless as a lark;
These lures I straight forget,—e'en ere I dine,
Or thrice my palate moisten: but when I mark
Such charms with mild intelligences shine,
My ear is open like a greedy shark,
To catch the tunings of a voice divine.

Ah! who can e'er forget so fair a being?
Who can forget her half-retiring sweets?
God! she is like a milk-white lamb that bleats
For man's protection. Surely the All-seeing,
Who joys to see us with his gifts agreeing,
Will never give him pinions, who intreats
Such innocence to ruin,—who vilely cheats
A dove-like bosom. In truth there is no freeing
One's thoughts from such a beauty; when I hear
A lay that once I saw her hand awake,
Her form seems floating palpable, and near:
Had I e'er seen her from an arbour take
A dewy flower, oft would that hand appear,
And o'er my eyes the trembling moisture shake.

ODE TO A NIGHTINGALE.

I.

My heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains
My sense, as though of hemlock I had drunk,
Or emptied some dull opiate to the drains
One minute past, and Lethe-wards had sunk:
'T is not through envy of thy happy lot,
But being too happy in thy happiness,—
That thou, light-winged Dryad of the trees,
In some melodious plot
Of beechen green, and shadows numberless,
Singest of summer in full-throated ease.

2.

O for a draught of vintage, that hath been
Cool'd a long age in the deep-delved earth,
Tasting of Flora and the country-green,
Dance, and Provençal song, and sun-burnt mirth!
O for a beaker full of the warm South,
Full of the true, the blushful Hippocrene,
With beaded bubbles winking at the brim,
And purple-stained mouth;
That I might drink, and leave the world unseen,
And with thee fade away into the forest dim:

3.

Fade far away, dissolve, and quite forget
What thou among the leaves hast never known,
The weariness, the fever, and the fret
Here, where men sit and hear each other groan;
Where palsy shakes a few, sad, last grey hairs,
Where youth grows pale, and spectre-thin, and dies;
Where but to think is to be full of sorrow
And leaden-eyed despairs,
Where Beauty cannot keep her lustrous eyes,
Or new Love pine at them beyond to-morrow.

4.

Away! away! for I will fly to thee,
Not charioted by Bacchus and his pards,
But on the viewless wings of Poesy,
Though the dull brain perplexes and retards:
Already with thee! tender is the night,
And haply the Queen-Moon is on her throne,
Cluster'd around by all her starry Fays;
But here there is no light,
Save what from heaven is with the breezes blown
Through verdurous glooms and winding mossy ways.

5.

I cannot see what flowers are at my feet,
Nor what soft incense hangs upon the boughs,
But, in embalmed darkness, guess each sweet
Wherewith the seasonable month endows
The grass, the thicket, and the fruit-tree wild;
White hawthorn, and the pastoral eglantine;
Fast-fading violets cover'd up in leaves;
And mid-May's eldest child,
The coming musk-rose, full of dewy wine,
The murmurous haunt of flies on summer eves.

6.

Darkling I listen; and, for many a time
I have been half in love with easeful Death,
Call'd him soft names in many a mused rhyme,
To take into the air my quiet breath;
Now more than ever seems it rich to die,
To cease upon the midnight with no pain,
While thou art pouring forth thy soul abroad
In such an ecstacy!
Still wouldst thou sing, and I have ears in vain—
To thy high requiem become a sod.

7.

Thou wast not born for death, immortal Bird!
No hungry generations tread thee down;
The voice I hear this passing night was heard
In ancient days by emperor and clown:
Perhaps the self-same song that found a path
Through the sad heart of Ruth, when, sick for home,
She stood in tears amid the alien corn;
The same that oft-times hath
Charm'd magic casements, opening on the foam
Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn.

8.

Forlorn! the very word is like a bell
To toll me back from thee to my sole self!
Adieu! the fancy cannot cheat so well
As she is famed to do, deceiving elf.
Adieu! adieu! thy plaintive anthem fades
Past the near meadows, over the still stream,
Up the hill-side; and now 't is buried deep
In the next valley-glades:
Was it a vision, or a waking dream?
Fled is that music:—Do I wake or sleep?

ODE ON A GRECIAN URN.

1.

Thou still unravish'd bride of quietness!
Thou foster-child of Silence and slow Time,
Sylvan historian, who canst thus express
A flowery tale more sweetly than our rhyme:
What leaf-fringed legend haunts about thy shape
Of deities or mortals, or of both,
In Tempe or the dales of Arcady?
What men or gods are these? What maidens loth?
What mad pursuit? What struggle to escape?
What pipes and timbrels? What wild ecstacy?

2.

Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard
Are sweeter; therefore, ye soft pipes, play on;
Not to the sensual ear, but, more endear'd,
Pipe to the spirit ditties of no tone:
Fair youth, beneath the trees, thou canst not leave
Thy song, nor ever can those trees be bare;
Bold Lover, never, never canst thou kiss,
Though winning near the goal—yet, do not grieve;
She cannot fade, though thou hast not thy bliss,
For ever wilt thou love, and she be fair!

3.

Ah, happy, happy boughs! that cannot shed
Your leaves, nor ever bid the Spring adieu;
And, happy melodist, unwearied,
For ever piping songs for ever new;
More happy love! more happy, happy love!
For ever warm and still to be enjoy'd,
For ever panting and for ever young;
All breathing human passion far above,
That leaves a heart high-sorrowful and cloy'd,
A burning forehead, and a parching tongue.

4.

Who are these coming to the sacrifice?
To what green altar, O mysterious priest,
Lead'st thou that heifer lowing at the skies,
And all her silken flanks with garlands drest?
What little town by river or sea-shore,
Or mountain-built with peaceful citadel,

Is emptied of this folk, this pious morn?
And, little town, thy streets for evermore
Will silent be; and not a soul to tell
Why thou art desolate, can e'er return.

5.

O Attic shape! Fair attitude! with brede
Of marble men and maidens overwrought,
With forest branches and the trodden weed;
Thou, silent form! dost tease us out of thought
As doth eternity: Cold Pastoral!
When old age shall this generation waste,
Thou shalt remain, in midst of other woe
Than ours, a friend to man, to whom thou say'st,
"Beauty is truth, truth beauty,"—that is all
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.

ODE TO PSYCHE.

O Goddess! hear these tuneless numbers, wrung
By sweet enforcement and remembrance dear,
And pardon that thy secrets should be sung,
Even into thine own soft-couched ear:
Surely I dreamt to-day, or did I see
The winged Psyche with awaken'd eyes?
I wander'd in a forest thoughtlessly,
And, on the sudden, fainting with surprise,
Saw two fair creatures, couched side by side
In deepest grass, beneath the whisp'ring roof
Of leaves and trembled blossoms, where there ran
A brooklet, scarce espied:
'Mid hush'd, cool-rooted flowers, fragrant-eyed,
Blue, silver-white, and budded Tyrian,
They lay calm-breathing on the bedded grass;
Their arms embraced, and their pinions too;
Their lips touch'd not, but had not bade adieu,
As if disjoined by soft-handed slumber,
And ready still past kisses to outnumber
At tender eye-dawn of aurorean love:
The winged boy I knew;
But who wast thou, O happy, happy dove?
His Psyche true!

O latest-born and loveliest vision far
Of all Olympus' faded hierarchy!
Fairer than Phœbe's sapphire-region'd star,
Or Vesper, amorous glow-worm of the sky;
Fairer than these, though temple thou hast none,
Nor altar heap'd with flowers;
Nor virgin-choir to make delicious moan
Upon the midnight hours;
No voice, no lute, no pipe, no incense sweet
From chain-swung censer teeming;
No shrine, no grove, no oracle, no heat
Of pale-mouth'd prophet dreaming.

O brightest! though too late for antique vows,
Too, too late for the fond believing lyre,
When holy were the haunted forest boughs,
Holy the air, the water, and the fire;
Yet even in these days so far retired
From happy pieties, thy lucent fans,
Fluttering among the faint Olympians,
I see, and sing, by my own eyes inspired.
So let me be thy choir, and make a moan
Upon the midnight hours;
Thy voice, thy lute, thy pipe, thy incense sweet
From swinged censer teeming;
Thy shrine, thy grove, thy oracle, thy heat
Of pale-mouth'd prophet dreaming.

Yes, I will be thy priest, and build a fane
In some untrodden region of my mind,
Where branched thoughts, new-grown with pleasant pain,
Instead of pines shall murmur in the wind:
Far, far around shall those dark-cluster'd trees
Fledge the wild-ridged mountains steep by steep;
And there by zephyrs, streams, and birds, and bees,
The moss-lain Dryads shall be lull'd to sleep;
And in the midst of this wide quietness
A rosy sanctuary will I dress
With the wreath'd trellis of a working brain,
With buds, and bells, and stars without a name,
With all the gardener Fancy e'er could feign,
Who breeding flowers, will never breed the same:
And there shall be for thee all soft delight
That shadowy thought can win,
A bright torch, and a casement ope at night,
To let the warm Love in!

FANCY.

Ever let the Fancy roam,
Pleasure never is at home:
At a touch sweet Pleasure melteth,
Like to bubbles when rain pelteth;
Then let winged Fancy wander
Through the thought still spread beyond her:
Open wide the mind's cage-door,
She 'll dart forth, and cloudward soar.
O sweet Fancy! let her loose;
Summer's joys are spoilt by use,
And the enjoying of the Spring
Fades as does its blossoming;
Autumn's red-lipp'd fruitage too,
Blushing through the mist and dew,
Cloys with tasting: What do then?
Sit thee by the ingle, when
The sear faggot blazes bright,
Spirit of a winter's night;
When the soundless earth is muffled,
And the caked snow is shuffled
From the ploughboy's heavy shoon;
When the Night doth meet the Noon
In a dark conspiracy
To banish Even from her sky.
Sit thee there, and send abroad,
With a mind self-overawed,
Fancy, high-commission'd:—send her!
She has vassals to attend her:
She will bring, in spite of frost,
Beauties that the earth hath lost;
She will bring thee, all together,
All delights of summer weather;
All the buds and bells of May,
From dewy sward or thorny spray;
All the heaped Autumn's wealth,
With a still, mysterious stealth:
She will mix these pleasures up
Like three fit wines in a cup,

And thou shalt quaff it:—thou shalt hear
Distant harvest-carols clear;
Rustle of the reaped corn;
Sweet birds antheming the morn:
And, in the same moment—hark!
'T is the early April lark,
Or the rooks, with busy caw,
Foraging for sticks and straw.
Thou shalt, at one glance, behold
The daisy and the marigold;
White-plumed lilies, and the first
Hedge-grown primrose that hath burst;
Shaded hyacinth, alway
Sapphire queen of the mid-May;
And every leaf, and every flower
Pearl'd with the self-same shower.
Thou shalt see the field-mouse peep
Meagre from its celled sleep;
And the snake all winter-thin
Cast on sunny bank its skin;
Freckled nest-eggs thou shalt see
Hatching in the hawthorn-tree,
When the hen-bird's wing doth rest
Quiet on her mossy nest;
Then the hurry and alarm
When the bee-hive casts its swarm;
Acorns ripe down-pattering,
While the autumn breezes sing.

Oh, sweet Fancy! let her loose;
Every thing is spoilt by use:
Where 's the cheek that doth not fade,
Too much gazed at? Where 's the maid
Whose lip mature is ever new!
Where 's the eye, however blue,
Doth not weary? Where 's the face
One would meet in every place?
Where 's the voice, however soft,
One would hear so very oft?
At a touch sweet Pleasure melteth
Like to bubbles when rain pelteth.
Let, then, winged Fancy find
Thee a mistress to thy mind:
Dulcet-eyed as Ceres' daughter,
Ere the God of Torment taught her
How to frown and how to chide;
With a waist and with a side
White as Hebe's, when her zone
Slipt its golden clasp, and down
Fell her kirtle to her feet,
While she held the goblet sweet,
And Jove grew languid.—Break the mesh
Of the Fancy's silken leash;
Quickly break her prison-string,
And such joys as these she 'll bring.—
Let the winged Fancy roam,
Pleasure never is at home.

ODE.

Bards of Passion and of Mirth,
Ye have left your souls on earth!
Have ye souls in heaven too,
Double-lived in regions new?
Yes, and those of heaven commune
With the spheres of sun and moon;
With the noise of fountains wond'rous,
And the parle of voices thund'rous;
With the whisper of heaven's trees
And one another, in soft ease
Seated on Elysian lawns
Browsed by none but Dian's fawns;
Underneath large blue-bells tented,
Where the daisies are rose-scented,
And the rose herself has got
Perfume which on earth is not;
Where the nightingale doth sing
Not a senseless, tranced thing,
But divine melodious truth;
Philosophic numbers smooth;
Tales and golden histories
Of heaven and its mysteries.

Thus ye live on high, and then
On the earth ye live again;
And the souls ye left behind you
Teach us, here, the way to find you,
Where your other souls are joying,
Never slumber'd, never cloying.
Here, your earth-born souls still speak
To mortals, of their little week;
Of their sorrows and delights;
Of their passions and their spites;
Of their glory and their shame;
What doth strengthen and what maim.
Thus ye teach us, every day,
Wisdom, though fled far away.

Bards of Passion and of Mirth,
Ye have left your souls on earth!
Ye have souls in heaven too,
Double-lived in regions new!

LINES ON THE MERMAID TAVERN.

Souls of poets dead and gone,
What Elysium have ye known,
Happy field or mossy cavern,
Choicer than the Mermaid Tavern?
Have ye tippled drink more fine
Than mine host's Canary wine?
Or are fruits of Paradise
Sweeter than those dainty pies
Of venison? O generous food!
Drest as though bold Robin Hood
Would, with his maid Marian,
Sup and bowse from horn and can.

I have heard that on a day
Mine host's sign-board flew away,
Nobody knew whither, till
An astrologer's old quill
To a sheepskin gave the story,—
Said he saw you in your glory,
Underneath a new old-sign
Sipping beverage divine,
And pledging with contented smack
The Mermaid in the Zodiac.

Souls of poets dead and gone,
What Elysium have ye known,
Happy field or mossy cavern,
Choicer than the Mermaid Tavern?

ROBIN HOOD.

TO A FRIEND.

No! those days are gone away,
And their hours are old and grey,
And their minutes buried all
Under the down-trodden pall
Of the leaves of many years:
Many times have Winter's shears,
Frozen North, and chilling East,
Sounded tempests to the feast
Of the forest's whispering fleeces,
Since men knew nor rent nor leases.

No, the bugle sounds no more,
And the twanging bow no more;
Silent is the ivory shrill
Past the heath and up the hill;
There is no mid-forest laugh,
Where lone Echo gives the half
To some wight, amazed to hear
Jesting, deep in forest drear.

On the fairest time of June
You may go, with sun or moon,
Or the seven stars to light you,
Or the polar ray to right you;
But you never may behold
Little John, or Robin bold;
Never one, of all the clan,
Thrumming on an empty can
Some old hunting ditty, while
He doth his green way beguile
To fair hostess Merriment,
Down beside the pasture Trent;
For he left the merry tale
Messenger for spicy ale.

Gone, the merry morris din;
Gone, the song of Gamelyn;
Gone, the tough-belted outlaw
Idling in the "grené shawe;"
All are gone away and past!
And if Robin should be cast
Sudden from his tufted grave,
And if Marian should have
Once again her forest days,
She would weep, and he would craze:
He would swear, for all his oaks,
Fall'n beneath the dock-yard strokes,
Have rotted on the briny seas;
She would weep that her wild bees
Sang not to her—strange! that honey
Can't be got without hard money!

So it is; yet let us sing
Honour to the old bow-string!
Honour to the bugle-horn!
Honour to the woods unshorn!
Honour to the Lincoln green!
Honour to the archer keen!
Honour to tight little John,
And the horse he rode upon!
Honour to bold Robin Hood,
Sleeping in the underwood!
Honour to maid Marian,
And to all the Sherwood clan!
Though their days have hurried by,
Let us two a burden try.

TO AUTUMN.

Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness!
Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun;
Conspiring with him how to load and bless
With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eves run;
To bend with apples the moss'd cottage-trees,
And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core;
To swell the gourd, and plump the hazel shells
With a sweet kernel; to set budding more,
And still more, later flowers for the bees,
Until they think warm days will never cease,
For Summer has o'er-brimm'd their clammy cells.

Who hath not seen thee oft amid thy store?
Sometimes whoever seeks abroad may find
Thee sitting careless on a granary floor,
Thy hair soft-lifted by the winnowing wind;
Or on a half-reap'd furrow sound asleep,
Drowsed with the fume of poppies, while thy hook
Spares the next swath and all its twined flowers;
And sometime like a gleaner thou dost keep
Steady thy laden head across a brook;
Or by a cyder-press, with patient look,
Thou watchest the last oozings, hours by hours.

Where are the songs of Spring? Ay, where are they?
Think not of them, thou hast thy music too,—
While barred clouds bloom the soft-dying day,
And touch the stubble-plains with rosy hue;
Then in a wailful choir the small gnats mourn
Among the river sallows, borne aloft
Or sinking as the light wind lives or dies;
And full-grown lambs loud bleat from hilly bourn;
Hedge-crickets sing; and now with treble soft
The red-breast whistles from a garden-croft,
And gathering swallows twitter in the skies.

ODE ON MELANCHOLY.

No, no, go not to Lethe, neither twist
Wolf's-bane, tight-rooted, for its poisonous wine;
Nor suffer thy pale forehead to be kiss'd
By nightshade, ruby grape of Proserpine;
Make not your rosary of yew-berries,
Nor let the beetle, nor the death-moth be
Your mournful Psyche, nor the downy owl
A partner in your sorrow's mysteries;
For shade to shade will come too drowsily,
And drown the wakeful anguish of the soul.

But when the melancholy fit shall fall
Sudden from heaven like a weeping cloud,
That fosters the droop-headed flowers all,
And hides the green hill in an April shroud;
Then glut thy sorrow on a morning rose,
Or on the rainbow of the salt sand-wave,
Or on the wealth of globed peonies;
Or if thy mistress some rich anger shows,
Emprison her soft hand, and let her rave,
And feed deep, deep upon her peerless eyes.

She dwells with Beauty—Beauty that must die;
And Joy, whose hand is ever at his lips
Bidding adieu; and aching Pleasure nigh,
Turning to poison while the bee-mouth sips:
Ay, in the very temple of Delight
Veil'd Melancholy has her sovran shrine,
Though seen of none save him whose strenuous tongue
Can burst Joy's grape against his palate fine;
His soul shall taste the sadness of her might,
And be among her cloudy trophies hung.

SLEEP AND POETRY.

As I lay in my bed slepe full unmete
Was unto me, but why that I ne might
Rest I ne wist, for there n' as erthly wight
(As I suppose) had more of hertis ese
Than I, for I n' ad sicknesse nor disese.
CHAUCER.

What is more gentle than a wind in summer?
What is more soothing than the pretty hummer
That stays one moment in an open flower,
And buzzes cheerily from bower to bower?
What is more tranquil than a musk-rose blowing
In a green island, far from all men's knowing?
More healthful than the leafiness of dales?
More secret than a nest of nightingales?
More serene than Cordelia's countenance?
More full of visions than a high romance?
What, but thee, Sleep? Soft closer of our eyes!
Low murmurer of tender lullabies!
Light hoverer around our happy pillows!
Wreather of poppy buds, and weeping willows!
Silent entangler of a beauty's tresses!
Most happy listener! when the morning blesses
Thee for enlivening all the cheerful eyes
That glance so brightly at the new sun-rise.

But what is higher beyond thought than thee?
Fresher than berries of a mountain-tree?
More strange, more beautiful, more smooth, more regal,
Than wings of swans, than doves, than dim-seen eagle?
What is it? And to what shall I compare it?
It has a glory, and nought else can share it:
The thought thereof is awful, sweet, and holy,
Chasing away all worldliness and folly:
Coming sometimes like fearful claps of thunder;
Or the low rumblings earth's regions under;
And sometimes like a gentle whispering
Of all the secrets of some wondrous thing
That breathes about us in the vacant air;
So that we look around with prying stare,
Perhaps to see shapes of light, aerial lymnings
And catch soft floatings from a faint-heard hymning;
To see the laurel-wreath, on high suspended,
That is to crown our name when life is ended.
Sometimes it gives a glory to the voice,
And from the heart up-springs, rejoice! rejoice!
Sounds which will reach the Framer of all things,
And die away in ardent mutterings.

No one who once the glorious sun has seen,
And all the clouds, and felt his bosom clean
For his great Maker's presence, but must know
What 't is I mean, and feel his being glow:
Therefore no insult will I give his spirit,
By telling what he sees from native merit.

O Poesy! for thee I hold my pen,
That am not yet a glorious denizen
Of thy wide heaven—should I rather kneel
Upon some mountain-top until I feel
A glowing splendour round about me hung,
And echo back the voice of thine own tongue?
O Poesy! for thee I grasp my pen
That am not yet a glorious denizen
Of thy wide heaven; yet, to my ardent prayer,
Yield from thy sanctuary some clear air,
Smoothed for intoxication by the breath
Of flowering bays, that I may die a death
Of luxury, and my young spirit follow
The morning sun-beams to the great Apollo,
Like a fresh sacrifice; or, if I can bear
The o'erwhelming sweets, 't will bring to me the fair
Visions of all places: a bowery nook
Will be elysium—an eternal book
Whence I may copy many a lovely saying
About the leaves, and flowers—about the playing
Of nymphs in woods, and fountains; and the shade
Keeping a silence round a sleeping maid;
And many a verse from so strange influence
That we must ever wonder how, and whence
It came. Also imaginings will hover
Round my fire-side, and haply there discover
Vistas of solemn beauty, where I 'd wander
In happy silence, like the clear Meander
Through its lone vales; and where I found a spot
Of awfuller shade, or an enchanted grot,
Or a green hill o'erspread with chequer'd dress
Of flowers, and fearful from its loveliness,
Write on my tablets all that was permitted,
All that was for our human senses fitted.
Then the events of this wide world I 'd seize
Like a strong giant, and my spirit tease
Till at its shoulders it should proudly see
Wings to find out an immortality.

Stop and consider! life is but a day;
A fragile dew-drop on its perilous way
From a tree's summit; a poor Indian's sleep
While his boat hastens to the monstrous steep
Of Montmorenci. Why so sad a moan?
Life is the rose's hope while yet unblown;
The reading of an ever-changing tale;
The light uplifting of a maiden's veil;
A pigeon tumbling in clear summer air;
A laughing school-boy, without grief or care,
Riding the springy branches of an elm.

O for ten years, that I may overwhelm
Myself in poesy! so I may do the deed
That my own soul has to itself decreed.
Then I will pass the countries that I see
In long perspective, and continually
Taste their pure fountains. First the realm I 'll pass
Of Flora, and old Pan: sleep in the grass,
Feed upon apples red, and strawberries,
And chuse each pleasure that my fancy sees;

Catch the white-handed nymphs in shady places,
To woo sweet kisses from averted faces,—
Play with their fingers, touch their shoulders white
Into a pretty shrinking with a bite
As hard as lips can make it: till agreed,
A lovely tale of human life we 'll read.
And one will teach a tame dove how it best
May fan the cool air gently o'er my rest:
Another, bending o'er her nimble tread,
Will set a green robe floating round her head,
And still will dance with ever-varied ease,
Smiling upon the flowers and the trees:
Another will entice me on, and on
Through almond blossoms and rich cinnamon;
Till in the bosom of a leafy world
We rest in silence, like two gems upcurl'd
In the recesses of a pearly shell.

And can I ever bid these joys farewell?
Yes, I must pass them for a nobler life,
Where I may find the agonies, the strife
Of human hearts: for lo! I see afar,
O'er-sailing the blue cragginess, a car
And steeds with streamy manes—the charioteer
Looks out upon the winds with glorious fear:
And now the numerous tramplings quiver lightly
Along a huge cloud's ridge; and now with sprightly
Wheel downward come they into fresher skies,
Tipt round with silver from the sun's bright eyes.
Still downward with capacious whirl they glide;
And now I see them on a green-hill side
In breezy rest among the nodding stalks.
The charioteer with wond'rous gesture talks
To the trees and mountains; and there soon appear
Shapes of delight, of mystery, and fear,
Passing along before a dusky space
Made by some mighty oaks: as they would chase
Some ever-fleeting music, on they sweep.
Lo! how they murmur, laugh, and smile, and weep:
Some with upholden hand and mouth severe;
Some with their faces muffled to the ear
Between their arms; some clear in youthful bloom,
Go glad and smilingly athwart the gloom;
Some looking back, and some with upward gaze;
Yes, thousands in a thousand different ways
Flit onward—now a lovely wreathe of girls
Dancing their sleek hair into tangled curls;
And now broad wings. Most awfully intent
The driver of those steeds is forward bent,
And seems to listen: O that I might know
All that he writes with such a hurrying glow!

The visions all are fled—the car is fled
Into the light of heaven, and in their stead
A sense of real things comes doubly strong,
And, like a muddy stream, would bear along
My soul to nothingness: but I will strive
Against all doubtings, and will keep alive
The thought of that same chariot, and the strange
Journey it went.

Is there so small a range
In the present strength of manhood, that the high
Imagination cannot freely fly
As she was wont of old? prepare her steeds,
Paw up against the light, and do strange deeds
Upon the clouds? Has she not shown us all?
From the clear space of ether, to the small
Breath of new buds unfolding? From the meaning
Of Jove's large eye-brow, to the tender greening
Of April meadows? Here her altar shone,
E'en in this isle; and who could paragon
The fervid choir that lifted up a noise
Of harmony, to where it aye will poise
Its mighty self of convoluting sound,
Huge as a planet, and like that roll round,
Eternally around a dizzy void?
Ay, in those days the Muses were nigh cloy'd
With honours; nor had any other care
Than to sing out and soothe their wavy hair.

Could all this be forgotten? Yes, a scism
Nurtured by foppery and barbarism,
Made great Apollo blush for this his land.
Men were thought wise who could not understand
His glories: with a puling infant's force
They sway'd about upon a rocking-horse,
And thought it Pegasus. Ah, dismal-soul'd!
The winds of Heaven blew, the ocean roll'd
Its gathering waves—ye felt it not. The blue
Bared its eternal bosom, and the dew
Of summer night collected still to make
The morning precious: Beauty was awake!
Why were ye not awake? But ye were dead
To things ye knew not of,—were closely wed
To musty laws lined out with wretched rule
And compass vile: so that ye taught a school
Of dolts to smooth, inlay, and clip, and fit,
Till, like the certain wands of Jacob's wit,
Their verses tallied. Easy was the task:
A thousand handicraftsmen wore the mask
Of Poesy. Ill-fated, impious race!
That blasphemed the bright Lyrist to his face,
And did not know it,—no, they went about,
Holding a poor, decrepid standard out,
Mark'd with most flimsy mottos, and in large
The name of one Boileau!

O ye whose charge
It is to hover round our pleasant hills!
Whose congregated majesty so fills
My boundly reverence, that I cannot trace
Your hallow'd names, in this unholy place,
So near those common folk; did not their shames
Affright you? Did our old lamenting Thames
Delight you! did ye never cluster round
Delicious Avon, with a mournful sound,
And weep? Or did ye wholly bid adieu
To regions where no more the laurel grew?
Or did ye stay to give a welcoming
To some lone spirits who could proudly sing
Their youth away, and die? 'T was even so:
But let me think away those times of woe:
Now 't is a fairer season; ye have breathed
Rich benedictions o'er us; ye have wreathed
Fresh garlands: for sweet music has been heard
In many places; some has been upstirr'd
From out its crystal dwelling in a lake,
By a swan's ebon bill; from a thick brake,
Nested and quiet in a valley mild,
Bubbles a pipe; fine sounds are floating wild
About the earth: happy are ye and glad.

These things are, doubtless: yet in truth we 've had
Strange thunders from the potency of song;
Mingled indeed with what is sweet and strong,
From majesty: but in clear truth the themes
Are ugly cubs, the Poets' Polyphemes
Disturbing the grand sea. A drainless shower
Of light is poesy; 't is the supreme of power;
'T is might half slumb'ring on its own right arm.
The very archings of her eye-lids charm
A thousand willing agents to obey,
And still she governs with the mildest sway:
But strength alone though of the Muses born
Is like a fallen angel: trees uptorn,
Darkness, and worms, and shrouds, and sepulchres
Delight it; for it feeds upon the burrs
And thorns of life; forgetting the great end
Of poesy, that it should be a friend
To soothe the cares, and lift the thoughts of man.

Yet I rejoice: a myrtle fairer than
E'er grew in Paphos, from the bitter weeds
Lifts its sweet head into the air, and feeds
A silent space with ever-sprouting green.
All tenderest birds there find a pleasant screen,
Creep through the shade with jaunty fluttering,
Nibble the little cupped flowers and sing.
Then let us clear away the choking thorns
From round its gentle stem; let the young fawns,
Yeaned in after-times, when we are flown,
Find a fresh sward beneath it, overgrown
With simple flowers: let there nothing be
More boisterous than a lover's bended knee;
Nought more ungentle than the placid look
Of one who leans upon a closed book;
Nought more untranquil than the grassy slopes
Between two hills. All hail, delightful hopes!
As she was wont, th' imagination
Into most lovely labyrinths will be gone,
And they shall be accounted poet kings
Who simply tell the most heart-easing things.
O may these joys be ripe before I die!

Will not some say that I presumptuously
Have spoken? that from hastening disgrace
'T were better far to hide my foolish face?
That whining boy-hood should with reverence bow
Ere the dread thunderbolt could reach? How!
If I do hide myself, it sure shall be
In the very fane, the light of Poesy:
If I do fall, at least I will be laid
Beneath the silence of a poplar shade;
And over me the grass shall be smooth shaven;
And there shall be a kind memorial graven.
But off, Despondence! miserable bane!
They should not know thee, who athirst to gain
A noble end, are thirsty every hour.
What though I am not wealthy in the dower
Of spanning wisdom; though I do not know
The shiftings of the mighty winds that blow
Hither and thither all the changing thoughts
Of man: though no great minist'ring reason sorts
Out the dark mysteries of human souls
To clear conceiving: yet there ever rolls
A vast idea before me, and I glean
Therefrom my liberty; thence too I 've seen
The end and aim of Poesy. 'T is clear
As any thing most true; as that the year
Is made of the four seasons—manifest
As a large cross, some old cathedral's crest,
Lifted to the white clouds. Therefore should I
Be but the essence of deformity,
A coward, did my very eye-lids wink
At speaking out what I have dared to think.
Ah! rather let me like a madman run
Over some precipice; let the hot sun
Melt my Dedalian wings, and drive me down
Convulsed and headlong! Stay! an inward frown
Of conscience bids me be more calm awhile.
An ocean dim, sprinkled with many an isle,
Spreads awfully before me. How much toil!
How many days! what desperate turmoil!
Ere I can have explored its widenesses.
Ah, what a task! upon my bended knees,
I could unsay those—no, impossible
Impossible!

For sweet relief I 'll dwell
On humbler thoughts, and let this strange assay
Begun in gentleness die so away.
E'en now all-tumult from my bosom fades:
I turn full-hearted to the friendly aids
That smooth the path of honour; brotherhood,
And friendliness, the nurse of mutual good.
The hearty grasp that sends a pleasant sonnet
Into the brain ere one can think upon it;
The silence when some rhymes are coming out;
And when they 're come, the very pleasant rout:
The message certain to be done to-morrow.
'T is perhaps as well that it should be to borrow
Some precious book from out its snug retreat,
To cluster round it when we next shall meet.
Scarce can I scribble on; for lovely airs
Are fluttering round the room like doves in pairs;
Many delights of that glad day recalling,
When first my senses caught their tender falling.
And with these airs come forms of elegance
Stooping their shoulders o'er a horse's prance,
Careless, and grand—fingers soft and round
Parting luxuriant curls;—and the swift bound
Of Bacchus from his chariot, when his eye
Made Ariadne's cheek look blushingly.
Thus I remember all the pleasant flow
Of words at opening a portfolio.

Things such as these are ever harbingers
To trains of peaceful images: the stirs
Of a swan's neck unseen among the rushes:
A linnet starting all about the bushes:
A butterfly, with golden wings broad-parted,
Nestling a rose, convulsed as though it smarted
With over-pleasure—many, many more,
Might I indulge at large in all my store
Of luxuries: yet I must not forget
Sleep, quiet with his poppy coronet:
For what there may be worthy in these rhymes
I partly owe to him: and thus, the chimes
Of friendly voices had just given place
To as sweet a silence, when I 'gan retrace
The pleasant day, upon a couch at ease.
It was a poet's house who keeps the keys

Of pleasure's temple.—Round about were hung
The glorious features of the bards who sung
In other ages—cold and sacred busts
Smiled at each other. Happy he who trusts
To clear Futurity his darling fame!
Then there were fauns and satyrs taking aim
At swelling apples with a frisky leap
And reaching fingers, 'mid a luscious heap
Of vine-leaves. Then there rose to view a fane
Of liney marble, and thereto a train
Of nymphs approaching fairly o'er the sward:
One, loveliest, holding her white hand toward
The dazzling sun-rise: two sisters sweet
Bending their graceful figures till they meet
Over the trippings of a little child:
And some are hearing, eagerly, the wild
Thrilling liquidity of dewy piping.
See, in another picture, nymphs are wiping
Cherishingly Diana's timorous limbs;—
A fold of lawny mantle dabbling swims
At the bath's edge, and keeps a gentle motion
With the subsiding crystal: as when ocean
Heaves calmly its broad swelling smoothness o'er
Its rocky marge, and balances once more
The patient weeds; that now unshent by foam
Feel all about their undulating home.
Sappho's meek head was there half smiling down
At nothing; just as though the earnest frown
Of over-thinking had that moment gone
From off her brow, and left her all alone.

Great Alfred's too, with anxious, pitying eyes,
As if he always listen'd to the sighs
Of the goaded world; and Kosciusko's, worn
By horrid suffrance—mightily forlorn.

Petrarch, outstepping from the shady green,
Starts at the sight of Laura; nor can wean
His eyes from her sweet face. Most happy they!
For over them was seen a free display
Of out-spread wings, and from between them shone
The face of Poesy: from off her throne
She overlook'd things that I scarce could tell,
The very sense of where I was might well
Keep Sleep aloof: but more than that there came
Thought after thought to nourish up the flame
Within my breast; so that the morning light
Surprised me even from a sleepless night;
And up I rose refresh'd, and glad, and gay,
Resolving to begin that very day
These lines; and howsoever they be done,
I leave them as a father does his son.

SONNETS.

TO MY BROTHER GEORGE.

Many the wonders I this day have seen:
The sun, when first he kist away the tears
That fill'd the eyes of Morn;—the laurel'd peers
Who from the feathery gold of evening lean;—
The Ocean with its vastness, its blue green,
Its ships, its rocks, its caves, its hopes, its fears,—
Its voice mysterious, which whoso hears
Must think on what will be, and what has been.
E'en now, dear George, while this for you I write,
Cynthia is from her silken curtains peeping
So scantly, that it seems her bridal night,
And she her half-discover'd revels keeping.
But what, without the social thought of thee,
Would be the wonders of the sky and sea?

TO ———.

Had I a man's fair form, then might my sighs
Be echoed swiftly through that ivory shell
Thine ear, and find thy gentle heart; so well
Would passion arm me for the enterprise:
But ah! I am no knight whose foeman dies;
No cuirass glistens on my bosom's swell;
I am no happy shepherd of the dell
Whose lips have trembled with a maiden's eyes.
Yet must I dote upon thee,—call thee sweet,
Sweeter by far than Hybla's honey'd roses
When steep'd in dew rich to intoxication.
Ah! I will taste that dew, for me 't is meet,
And when the moon her pallied face discloses,
I 'll gather some by spells, and incantation.

WRITTEN ON THE DAY THAT MR LEIGH HUNT LEFT PRISON.

What though, for showing truth to flatter'd state,
Kind Hunt was shut in prison, yet has he,
In his immortal spirit, been as free
As the sky-searching lark, and as elate.
Minion of grandeur! think you he did wait?
Think you he nought but prison-walls did see,
Till, so unwilling, thou unturn'dst the key?
Ah, no! far happier, nobler was his fate!
In Spenser's halls he stray'd, and bowers fair,
Culling enchanted flowers; and he flew
With daring Milton through the fields of air:
To regions of his own his genius true
Took happy flights. Who shall his fame impair
When thou art dead, and all thy wretched crew?

How many bards gild the lapses of time!
A few of them have ever been the food
Of my delighted fancy,—I could brood
Over their beauties, earthly, or sublime:
And often, when I sit me down to rhyme,
These will in throngs before my mind intrude:
But no confusion, no disturbance rude
Do they occasion; 't is a pleasing chime.
So the unnumber'd sounds that evening store;
The songs of birds—the whisp'ring of the leaves—
The voice of waters—the great bell that heaves
With solemn sound,—and thousand others more,
That distance of recognizance bereaves,
Make pleasing music, and not wild uproar.

TO A FRIEND WHO SENT ME SOME ROSES.

As late I rambled in the happy fields,
What time the sky-lark shakes the tremulous dew
From his lush clover covert;—when anew
Adventurous knights take up their dinted shields:

I saw the sweetest flower wild nature yields,
A fresh-blown musk-rose; 't was the first that threw
Its sweets upon the summer: graceful it grew
As is the wand that queen Titania wields.
And, as I feasted on its fragrancy,
I thought the garden-rose it far excell'd;
But when, O Wells! thy roses came to me
My sense with their deliciousness was spell'd:
Soft voices had they, that with tender plea
Whisper'd of peace, and truth, and friendliness unquell'd.

TO G. A. W.

Nymph of the downward smile, and sidelong glance!
In what diviner moments of the day
Art thou most lovely? when gone far astray
Into the labyrinths of sweet utterance?
Or when serenely wand'ring in a trance
Of sober thought? Or when starting away,
With careless robe to meet the morning ray,
Thou sparest the flowers in thy mazy dance?
Haply 't is when thy ruby lips part sweetly,
And so remain, because thou listenest:
But thou to please wert nurtured so completely
That I can never tell what mood is best,
I shall as soon pronounce which Grace more neatly
Trips it before Apollo than the rest.

O Solitude! if I must with thee dwell,
Let it not be among the jumbled heap
Of murky buildings: climb with me the steep,—
Nature's observatory—whence the dell,
Its flowery slopes, its river's crystal swell,
May seem a span; let me thy vigils keep
'Mongst boughs pavilion'd, where the deer's swift leap,
Startles the wild bee from the fox-glove bell.
But though I'll gladly trace these scenes with thee,
Yet the sweet converse of an innocent mind,
Whose words are images of thoughts refined,
Is my soul's pleasure; and it sure must be
Almost the highest bliss of human-kind,
When to thy haunts two kindred spirits flee.

TO MY BROTHERS.

Small, busy flames play through the fresh-laid coals,
And their faint cracklings o'er our silence creep
Like whispers of the household gods that keep
A gentle empire o'er fraternal souls.
And while, for rhymes, I search around the poles,
Your eyes are fix'd, as in poetic sleep,
Upon the lore so voluble and deep,
That aye at fall of night our care condoles.
This is your birth-day, Tom, and I rejoice
That thus it passes smoothly, quietly,
Many such eves of gently whisp'ring noise
May we together pass, and calmly try
What are this world's true joys,—ere the great Voice,
From its fair face shall bid our spirits fly.

November 18, 1816.

Keen fitful gusts are whispering here and there
Among the bushes, half leafless and dry;
The stars look very cold about the sky,
And I have many miles on foot to fare.
Yet feel I little of the cool bleak air,
Or of the dead leaves rustling drearily,
Or of those silver lamps that burn on high,
Or of the distance from home's pleasant lair:
For I am brimfull of the friendliness
That in a little cottage I have found;
Of fair-hair'd Milton's eloquent distress,
And all his love for gentle Lycid' drown'd;
Of lovely Laura in her light green dress,
And faithful Petrarch gloriously crown'd.

To one who has been long in city pent,
'T is very sweet to look into the fair
And open face of heaven,—to breathe a prayer
Full in the smile of the blue firmament.
Who is more happy, when, with heart's content,
Fatigued he sinks into some pleasant lair
Of wavy grass, and reads a debonair
And gentle tale of love and languishment?
Returning home at evening, with an ear
Catching the notes of Philomel,—an eye
Watching the sailing cloudlet's bright career,
He mourns that day so soon has glided by:
E'en like the passage of an angel's tear
That falls through the clear ether silently.

ON FIRST LOOKING INTO CHAPMAN'S HOMER.

Much have I travell'd in the realms of gold,
And many goodly states and kingdoms seen;
Round many western islands have I been
Which bards in fealty to Apollo hold.
Oft of one wide expanse had I been told
That deep-brow'd Homer ruled as his demesne:
Yet did I never breathe its pure serene
Till I heard Chapman speak out loud and bold:
Then felt I like some watcher of the skies
When a new planet swims into his ken;
Or like stout Cortez when with eagle eyes
He stared at the Pacific—and all his men
Look'd at each other with a wild surmise—
Silent, upon a peak in Darien.

ON LEAVING SOME FRIENDS AT AN EARLY HOUR.

Give me a golden pen, and let me lean
On heap'd up flowers, in regions clear, and far;
Bring me a tablet whiter than a star,
Or hand of hymning angel, when 't is seen
The silver strings of heavenly harp atween:
And let there glide by many a pearly car,
Pink robes, and wavy hair, and diamond jar,
And half-discover'd wings, and glances keen.
The while let music wander round my ears,
And as it reaches each delicious ending,
Let me write down a line of glorious tone,
And full of many wonders of the spheres:
For what a height my spirit is contending!
'T is not content so soon to be alone.

ADDRESSED TO HAYDON.

High-mindedness, a jealousy for good,
A loving-kindness for the great man's fame,
Dwells here and there with people of no name,
In noisome alley, and in pathless wood:
And where we think the truth least understood.
Oft may be found a «singleness of aim,»
That ought to frighten into hooded shame
A money-mong'ring, pitiable brood.
How glorious this affection for the cause
Of stedfast genius, toiling gallantly!
What when a stout unbending champion awes
Envy, and malice to their native sty?
Unnumber'd souls breathe out a still applause,
Proud to behold him in his country's eye.

ADDRESSED TO THE SAME.

Great spirits now on earth are sojourning:
He of the cloud, the cataract, the lake,
Who on Helvellyn's summit, wide awake,
Catches his freshness from Archangel's wing:
He of the rose, the violet, the spring,
The social smile, the chain for Freedom's sake:
And lo! whose stedfastness would never take
A meaner sound than Raphael's whispering.
And other spirits there are standing apart
Upon the forehead of the age to come;
These, these will give the world another heart,
And other pulses. Hear ye not the hum
Of mighty workings?———
Listen awhile ye nations, and be dumb.

ON THE GRASSHOPPER AND CRICKET.

The poetry of earth is never dead:
When all the birds are faint with the hot sun,
And hide in cooling trees, a voice will run
From hedge to hedge about the new-mown mead:
That is the grasshopper's—he takes the lead
In summer luxury,—he has never done
With his delights, for when tired out with fun,
He rests at ease beneath some pleasant weed.
The poetry of earth is ceasing never:
On a lone winter evening, when the frost
Has wrought a silence, from the stove there shrills
The Cricket's song, in warmth increasing ever,
And seems to one in drowsiness half lost,
The Grasshopper's among some grassy hills.

December 30, 1816.

TO KOSCIUSKO.

Good Kosciusko! thy great name alone
Is a full harvest whence to reap high feeling;
It comes upon us like the glorious pealing
Of the wide spheres—an everlasting tone.
And now it tells me, that in worlds unknown,
The names of heroes, burst from clouds concealing,
And changed to harmonies, for ever stealing
Through cloudless blue, and round each silver throne.
It tells me too, that on a happy day,
When some good spirit walks upon the earth,
Thy name with Alfred's, and the great of yore,
Gently commingling, gives tremendous birth
To a loud hymn, that sounds far, far away
To where the great God lives for evermore.

Happy is England! I could be content
To see no other verdure than its own;
To feel no other breezes than are blown
Through its tall woods with high romances blent:
Yet do I sometimes fell a languishment
For skies Italian, and an inward groan
To sit upon an Alp as on a throne,
And half forget what world or worldling meant.
Happy is England, sweet her artless daughters;
Enough their simple loveliness for me,
Enough their whitest arms in silence clinging:
Yet do I often warmly burn to see
Beauties of deeper glance, and hear their singing,
And float with them about the summer waters.

THE HUMAN SEASONS.

Four Seasons fill the measure of the year;
There are four seasons in the mind of man:
He has his lusty Spring, when fancy clear
Takes in all beauty with an easy span:
He has his Summer, when luxuriously
Spring's honey'd cud of youthful thought he loves
To ruminate, and by such dreaming nigh
Is nearest unto heaven: quiet coves
His soul has in its Autumn, when his wings
He furleth close; contented so to look
On mists in idleness—to let fair things
Pass by unheeded as a threshold brook.
He has his Winter too of pale misfeature,
Or else he would forego his mortal nature.

ON A PICTURE OF LEANDER.

Come hither all sweet maidens soberly,
Down-looking aye, and with a chasten'd light,
Hid in the fringes of your eye-lids white,
And meekly let your fair hands joined be,
As if so gentle that ye could not see,
Untouch'd, a victim of your beauty bright,
Sinking away to his young spirit's night,
Sinking bewilder'd 'mid the dreary sea:
'T is young Leander toiling to his death;
Nigh swooning, he doth purse his weary lips
For Hero's cheek, and smiles against her smile.
O horrid dream! see how his body dips
Dead-heavy; arms and shoulders gleam awhile:
He 's gone; up bubbles all his amorous breath!

TO AILSA ROCK.

Hearken, thou craggy ocean pyramid!
Give answer from thy voice, the sea-fowl's screams!
When were thy shoulders mantled in huge streams?
When, from the sun, was thy broad forehead hid?

How long is 't since the mighty power bid
Thee heave to airy sleep from fathom dreams?
Sleep in the lap of thunder or sun-beams,
Or when grey clouds are thy cold cover-lid?
Thou answer'st not, for thou art dead asleep!
Thy life is but two dead eternities—
The last in air, the former in the deep;
First with the whales, last with the eagle-skies—
Drown'd wast thou till an earthquake made thee steep,
Another cannot wake thy giant size.

EPISTLES.

> Among the rest a shepherd (though but young
> Yet harined to his pipe) with all the skill
> His few yeeres could, began to fit his quill.
> *Britannia's Pastorals.*—BROWNE.

TO GEORGE FELTON MATHEW.

SWEET are the pleasures that to verse belong,
And doubly sweet a brotherhood in song;
Nor can remembrance, Mathew! bring to view
A fate more pleasing, a delight more true
Than that in which the brother poets joy'd,
Who, with combined powers, their wit employ'd
To raise a trophy to the drama's muses.
The thought of this great partnership diffuses
Over the genius-loving heart, a feeling
Of all that's high, and great, and good, and healing.
Too partial friend! fain would I follow thee
Past each horizon of fine poesy;
Fain would I echo back each pleasant note
As o'er Sicilian seas, clear anthems float
'Mong the light skimming gondolas far parted,
Just when the sun his farewell beam has darted:
But 't is impossible; far different cares
Beckon me sternly from soft «Lydian airs,»
And hold my faculties so long in thrall,
That I am oft in doubt whether at all
I shall again see Phœbus in the morning:
Or flush'd Aurora in the roseate dawning!
Or a white Naiad in a rippling stream;
Or a rapt seraph in a moonlight beam;
Or again witness what with thee I 've seen,
The dew by fairy feet swept from the green,
After a night of some quaint jubilee
Which every elf and fay had come to see:
When bright processions took their airy march
Beneath the curved moon's triumphal arch.

But might I now each passing moment give
To the coy muse, with me she would not live
In this dark city, nor would condescend
'Mid contradictions her delights to lend.
Should e'er the fine-eyed maid to me be kind,
Ah! surely it must be whene'er I find
Some flowery spot, sequester'd, wild, romantic,
That often must have seen a poet frantic;
Where oaks, that erst the Druid knew, are growing,
And flowers, the glory of one day, are blowing;
Where the dark-leaved laburnum's drooping clusters
Reflect athwart the stream their yellow lustres,
And intertwined the cassia's arms unite,
With its own drooping buds, but very white.
Where on one side are covert branches hung,
'Mong which the nightingales have always sung
In leafy quiet; where to pry, aloof
Atween the pillars of the sylvan roof,
Would be to find where violet beds were nestling,
And where the bee with cowslip bells was wrestling.
There must be too a ruin dark, and gloomy,
To say «joy not too much in all that 's bloomy.»

Yet this is vain—O Mathew! lend thy aid
To find a place where I may greet the maid—
Where we may soft humanity put on,
And sit, and rhyme, and think on Chatterton;
And that warm-hearted Shakespeare sent to meet him
Four laurell'd spirits, heavenward to entreat him.
With reverence would we speak of all the sages
Who have left streaks of light athwart their ages:
And thou shouldst moralize on Milton's blindness,
And mourn the fearful dearth of human kindness
To those who strove with the bright golden wing
Of genius, to flap away each sting
Thrown by the pitiless world. We next could tell
Of those who in the cause of freedom fell;
Of our own Alfred, of Helvetian Tell;
Of him whose name to every heart 's a solace,
High-minded and unbending William Wallace.
While to the rugged north our musing turns
We well might drop a tear for him, and Burns.
Felton! without incitements such as these,
How vain for me the niggard Muse to tease!
For thee, she will thy every dwelling grace,
And make «a sun-shine in a shady place:»
For thou wast once a flowret blooming wild,
Close to the source, bright, pure, and undefiled,
Whence gush the streams of song: in happy hour
Came chaste Diana from her shady bower,
Just as the sun was from the east uprising;
And, as for him some gift she was devising,
Beheld thee, pluck'd thee, cast thee in the stream
To meet her glorious brother's greeting beam.
I marvel much that thou hast never told
How, from a flower, into a fish of gold
Apollo changed thee: how thou next didst seem
A black-eyed swan upon the widening stream;
And when thou first didst in that mirror trace
The placid features of a human face:
That thou hast never told thy travels strange,
And all the wonders of the mazy range
O'er pebbly chrystal, and o'er golden sands;
Kissing thy daily food from Naiad's pearly hands.

November, 1815.

TO MY BROTHER GEORGE.

FULL many a dreary hour have I past,
My brain bewilder'd, and my mind o'ercast
With heaviness; in seasons when I 've thought
No sphery strains by me could e'er be caught
From the blue dome, though I to dimness gaze
On the far depth where sheeted lightning plays;
Or, on the wavy grass outstretch'd supinely,
Pry 'mong the stars, to strive to think divinely:
That I should never hear Apollo's song,
Though feathery clouds were floating all along

The purple west, and, two bright streaks between,
The golden lyre itself were dimly seen:
That the still murmur of the honey-bee
Would never teach a rural song to me:
That the bright glance from beauty's eyelids slanting
Would never make a lay of mine enchanting,
Or warm my breast with ardour to unfold
Some tale of love and arms in time of old.

But there are times, when those that love the bay,
Fly from all sorrowing far, far away;
A sudden glow comes on them, nought they see
In water, earth, or air, but poesy.
It has been said, dear George, and true I hold it,
(For knightly Spenser to Libertas told it),
That when a Poet is in such a trance,
In air he sees white coursers paw and prance,
Bestridden of gay knights, in gay apparel,
Who at each other tilt in playful quarrel;
And what we, ignorantly, sheet-lightning call,
Is the swift opening of their wide portal,
When the bright warder blows his trumpet clear,
Whose tones reach nought on earth but poet's ear.
When these enchanted portals open wide,
And through the light the horsemen swiftly glide,
The Poet's eye can reach those golden halls,
And view the glory of their festivals:
Their ladies fair, that in the distance seem
Fit for the silv'ring of a seraph's dream;
Their rich brimm'd goblets, that incessant run,
Like the bright spots that move about the sun;
And when upheld, the wine from each bright jar
Pours with the lustre of a falling star.
Yet further off, are dimly seen their bowers,
Of which no mortal eye can reach the flowers;
And 't is right just, for well Apollo knows
'T would make the Poet quarrel with the rose.
All that 's reveal'd from that far seat of blisses,
Is, the clear fountains' interchanging kisses,
As gracefully descending, light and thin,
Like silver streaks across a dolphin's fin,
When he upswimmeth from the coral caves,
And sports with half his tail above the waves.

These wonders strange he sees, and many more,
Whose head is pregnant with poetic lore:
Should he upon an evening ramble fare
With forehead to the soothing breezes bare,
Would he nought see but the dark, silent blue,
With all its diamonds trembling through and through?
Or the coy moon, when in the waviness
Of whitest clouds she does her beauty dress,
And staidly paces higher up, and higher,
Like a sweet nun in holiday attire?
Ah, yes! much more would start into his sight—
The revelries, and mysteries of night:
And should I ever see them, I will tell you
Such tales as needs must with amazement spell you.

These aye the living pleasures of the bard:
But richer far posterity's award.
What does he murmur with his latest breath,
While his proud eye looks through the film of death?
« What though I leave this dull, and earthly mould,
Yet shall my spirit lofty converse hold
With after times.—The patriot shall feel
My stern alarum, and unsheath his steel;
Or in the senate thunder out my numbers,
To startle princes from their easy slumbers.
The sage will mingle with each moral theme
My happy thoughts sententious: he will teem
With lofty periods when my verses fire him,
And then I 'll stoop from heaven to inspire him.
Lays have I left of such a dear delight
That maids will sing them on their bridal-night.
Gay villagers, upon a morn of May,
When they have tired their gentle limbs with play,
And form'd a snowy circle on the grass,
And placed in midst of all that lovely lass
Who chosen is their queen,—with her fine head
Crown'd with flowers purple, white, and red:
For there the lily, and the musk-rose, sighing,
Are emblems true of hapless lovers dying:
Between her breasts, that never yet felt trouble,
A bunch of violets full blown, and double,
Serenely sleep:—she from a casket takes
A little book,—and then a joy awakes
About each youthful heart,—with stifled cries,
And rubbing of white hands, and sparkling eyes:
For she 's to read a tale of hopes, and fears;
One that I foster'd in my youthful years:
The pearls, that on each glistening circlet sleep,
Gush ever and anon with silent creep,
Lured by the innocent dimples. To sweet rest
Shall the dear babe, upon its mother's breast,
Be lull'd with songs of mine. Fair world, adieu!
Thy dales, and hills, are fading from my view:
Swiftly I mount, upon wide-spreading pinions,
Far from the narrow bounds of thy dominions.
Full joy I feel, while thus I cleave the air,
That my soft verse will charm thy daughters fair,
And warm thy sons!» Ah, my dear friend and brother,
Could I, at once, my mad ambition smother,
For tasting joys like these, sure I should be
Happier, and dearer to society.
At times, 't is true, I 've felt relief from pain
When some bright thought has darted through my brain:
Through all that day I 've felt a greater pleasure
Than if I had brought to light a hidden treasure.
As to my sonnets, though none else should heed them,
I feel delighted, still, that you should read them.
Of late, too, I have had much calm enjoyment,
Stretch'd on the grass at my best loved employment
Of scribbling lines for you. These things I thought
While, in my face, the freshest breeze I caught.
E'en now, I am pillow'd on a bed of flowers
That crowns a lofty cliff, which proudly towers
Above the ocean waves. The stalks, and blades,
Chequer my tablet with their quivering shades.
On one side is a field of drooping oats,
Through which the poppies show their scarlet coats,
So pert and useless, that they bring to mind
The scarlet coats that pester human-kind.
And on the other side, outspread, is seen
Ocean's blue mantle, streak'd with purple and green;
Now 't is I see a canvass'd ship, and now
Mark the bright silver curling round her prow.
I see the lark down-dropping to his nest,
And the broad-wing'd sea-gull never at rest;
For when no more he spreads his feathers free,
His breast is dancing on the restless sea.

Now I direct my eyes into the West,
Which at this moment is in sun-beams drest:
Why westward turn? 'T was but to say adieu!
'T was but to kiss my hand, dear George, to you!
August, 1816.

TO CHARLES COWDEN CLARKE.

Oft have you seen a swan superbly frowning,
And with proud breast his own white shadow crowning;
He slants his neck beneath the waters bright
So silently, it seems a beam of light
Come from the galaxy: anon he sports,—
With outspread wings the Naiad Zephyr courts,
Or ruffles all the surface of the lake
In striving from its crystal face to take
Some diamond water-drops, and them to treasure
In milky nest, and sip them off at leisure.
But not a moment can he there ensure them,
Nor to such downy rest can he allure them;
For down they rush as though they would be free,
And drop like hours into eternity.
Just like that bird am I in loss of time,
Whene'er I venture on the stream of rhyme;
With shatter'd boat, oar snapt, and canvass rent,
I slowly sail, scarce knowing my intent;
Still scooping up the water with my fingers,
In which a trembling diamond never lingers.

By this, friend Charles, you may full plainly see
Why I have never penn'd a line to thee:
Because my thoughts were never free, and clear,
And little fit to please a classic ear;
Because my wine was of too poor a savour
For one whose palate gladdens in the flavour
Of sparkling Helicon:—small good it were
To take him to a desert rude and bare,
Who had on Baiæ's shore reclined at ease,
While Tasso's page was floating in a breeze
That gave soft music from Armida's bowers,
Mingled with fragrance from her rarest flowers:
Small good to one who had by Mulla's stream
Fondled the maidens with the breasts of cream;
Who had beheld Belphœbe in a brook,
And lovely Una in a leafy nook,
And Archimago leaning o'er his book:
Who had of all that 's sweet tasted, and seen,
From silv'ry ripple, up to beauty's queen;
From the sequester'd haunts of gay Titania,
To the blue dwelling of divine Urania:
One, who, of late had ta'en sweet forest walks
With him who elegantly chats and talks—
The wrong'd Libertas—who has told you stories
Of laurel chaplets, and Apollo's glories;
Of troops chivalrous prancing through a city,
And tearful ladies, made for love and pity:
With many else which I have never known.
Thus have I thought; and days on days have flown
Slowly, or rapidly—unwilling still
For you to try my dull, unlearned quill.
Nor should I now, but that I 've known you long;
That you first taught me all the sweets of song:
The grand, the sweet, the terse, the free, the fine:
What swell'd with pathos, and what right divine:
Spenserian vowels that elope with ease,
And float along like birds o'er summer seas:
Miltonian storms, and more, Miltonian tenderness:
Michael in arms, and more, meek Eve's fair slenderness.
Who read for me the sonnet swelling loudly
Up to its climax, and then dying proudly?
Who found for me the grandeur of the ode,
Growing, like Atlas, stronger from its load?
Who let me taste that more than cordial dram,
The sharp, the rapier-pointed epigram?
Show'd me that epic was of all the king,
Round, vast, and spanning all, like Saturn's ring?
You too upheld the veil from Clio's beauty,
And pointed out the patriot's stern duty;
The might of Alfred, and the shaft of Tell;
The hand of Brutus, that so grandly fell
Upon a tyrant's head. Ah! had I never seen,
Or known your kindness, what might I have been?
What my enjoyments in my youthful years,
Bereft of all that now my life endears?
And can I e'er these benefits forget?
And can I e'er repay the friendly debt?
No, doubly no;—yet should these rhymings please,
I shall roll on the grass with two-fold ease;
For I have long time been my fancy feeding
With hopes that you would one day think the reading
Of my rough verses not an hour mispent;
Should it e'er be so, what a rich content!
Some weeks have pass'd since last I saw the spires
In lucent Thames reflected:—warm desires
To see the sun o'er-peep the eastern dimness,
And morning-shadows streaking into slimness
Across the lawny fields, and pebbly water;
To mark the time as they grow broad and shorter;
To feel the air that plays about the hills,
And sips its freshness from the little rills;
To see high, golden corn wave in the light
When Cynthia smiles upon a summer's night,
And peers among the cloudlets, jet and white,
As though she were reclining in a bed
Of bean-blossoms, in heaven freshly shed.
No sooner had I stepp'd into these pleasures,
Than I began to think of rhymes and measures;
The air that floated by me seem'd to say
"Write! thou wilt never have a better day."
And so I did. When many lines I 'd written,
Though with their grace I was not oversmitten,
Yet, as my hand was warm, I thought I 'd better
Trust to my feelings, and write you a letter.
Such an attempt required an inspiration
Of a peculiar sort,—a consummation;—
Which, had I felt, these scribblings might have been
Verses from which the soul would never wean;
But many days have past since last my heart
Was warm'd luxuriously by divine Mozart;
By Arne delighted, or by Handel madden'd;
Or by the song of Erin pierced and sadden'd:
What time you were before the music sitting,
And the rich notes to each sensation fitting.
Since I have walk'd with you through shady lanes
That freshly terminate in open plains,
And revell'd in a chat that ceased not,
When, at night-fall, among your books we got:
No, nor when supper came, nor after that,—
Nor when reluctantly I took my hat;

No, nor till cordially you shook my hand
Mid-way between our homes:—your accents bland
Still sounded in my ears, when I no more
Could hear your footsteps touch the gravelly floor.
Sometimes I lost them, and then found again;
You changed the foot-path for the grassy plain.
In those still moments I have wish'd you joys
That well you know to honour:—"Life's very toys
With him," said I, "will take a pleasant charm;
It cannot be that aught will work him harm."
These thoughts now come o'er me with all their might:—
Again I shake your hand,—friend Charles, good night.

September, 1816.

STANZAS.

In a drear-nighted December,
Too happy, happy tree,
Thy branches ne'er remember
Their green felicity:
The north cannot undo them,
With a sleety whistle through them;
Nor frozen thawings glue them
From budding at the prime.

In a drear-nighted December,
Too happy, happy brook,
Thy bubblings ne'er remember
Apollo's summer look;
But with a sweet forgetting,
They stay their crystal fretting,
Never, never petting
About the frozen time.

Ah! would 't were so with many
A gentle girl and boy!
But were there ever any
Writhed not at passed joy?
To know the change and feel it,
When there is none to heal it,
Nor numbed sense to steal it,
Was never said in rhyme.

THE END.

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